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THE  
LIFE OF  
LORD NELSON.

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BY  
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POET LAUREATE, ETC. ETC.

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# THE LIFE OF NELSON.

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## CHAPTER I.

*Nelson's Birth and Boyhood—He is entered on board the Raisonnable—Goes to the West Indies in a Merchant-ship; then serves in the Triumph—He sails in Capt. Phipp's Voyage of Discovery—Goes to the East Indies in the Seahorse, and returns in ill Health—Serves as acting Lieutenant in the Worcester, and is made Lieutenant into the Lowestoffe, Commander in the Badger Brig, and Post into the Hinchinbrook—Expedition against the Spanish Main—Sent to the South Seas in the Albermarle—Services during the American War.*

HORATIO, son of Edmund and Catharine Nelson, was born Sept. 29, 1758, in the parsonage house of Burnham Thorpe, a village in the county of Norfolk, of which his father was rector. The maiden name of his mother was Suckling; her grandmother was an elder sister of Sir Robert Walpole, and this child was named after his grandfather, the first Lord Walpole. Mrs. Nelson died in 1767, leaving eight, out of eleven, children. Her brother, Capt. Maurice Suckling, of the navy, visited the widower upon this event, and promised to take care of one of the boys. Three years afterward, when Horatio was only twelve years of age, being at home during the Christmas holidays, he read in the county newspaper that his uncle was appointed to the *Raisonnable*, of 64 guns. "Do William," said he to a brother who was two years older than himself, "write to my father, and tell him I should like to go to sea with uncle Maurice." Mr. Nelson was then at Bath, whither he had gone for the recovery of his health; his circumstances were straitened, and he had no prospect of ever seeing them bettered: he knew that it was the wish of providing for himself by which Horatio was chiefly actuated; and did not oppose his resolution: he understood also the boy's character, and always said, that in whatever station he might be placed, he would climb, if possible, to the very top of the tree. Accordingly, Capt. Suckling was written to. "What," said he in his answer, "has poor Horatio done, who is so weak, that he, above all the rest, should be sent to rough it out at sea? But let him come, and the first time we go into action, a cannon ball may knock off his head, and provide for him at once."

It is manifest from these words, that Horatio was not the boy whom his uncle would have chosen to bring up in his own profession. He was



never of a strong body ; and the ague, which at that time was one of the most common diseases in England, had greatly reduced his strength ; yet he had already given proofs of that resolute heart and nobleness of mind, which, during his whole career of labour and of glory, so eminently distinguished him. When a mere child, he strayed a bird's-nesting from his grandmother's house in company with a cow-boy : the dinner hour elapsed ; he was absent, and could not be found ; and the alarm of the family became very great, for they apprehended that he might have been carried off by gipsies. At length, after search had been made for him in various directions, he was discovered alone, sitting composedly by the side of a brook in which he could not get over. " I wonder, child," said the old lady, when she saw him, " that hunger and fear did not drive you home."—" Fear ! grandmamma," replied the future hero, " I never saw fear :—What is it ?" Once, after the winter holidays, when he and his brother William had set off on horseback to return to school, they came back, because there had been a fall of snow ; and William, who did not much like the journey, said it was too deep for them to venture on. " If that be the case," said the father, " you certainly shall not go ; but make another attempt, and I will leave it to your honour. If the road is dangerous, you may return : but remember, boys, I leave it to your honour." The snow was deep enough to have afforded them a reasonable excuse : but Horatio was not to be prevailed upon to turn back. " We must go on," said he : " remember, brother, it was left to our honour !"—There were some fine pears growing in the schoolmaster's garden, which the boys regarded as lawful booty, and in the highest degree tempting ; but the boldest among them were afraid to venture for the prize. Horatio volunteered upon this service : he was lowered down at night from the bed-room window by some sheets, plundered the tree, was drawn up with the pears, and then distributed them among his schoolfellows without reserving any for himself.—" He only took them," he said, " because every other boy was afraid."

Early on a cold and dark spring morning Mr. Nelson's servant arrived at this school, at North Walsham, with the expected summons for Horatio to join his ship. The parting from his brother William, who had been for so many years his playmate and bedfellow, was a painful effort, and was the beginning of those privations which are the sailor's lot through life. He accompanied his father to London. The *Raisonnable* was lying in the Medway. He was put into the Chatham stage, and on its arrival was set down with the rest of the passengers, and left to find his way on board as he could. After wandering about in the cold, without being able to reach the ship, an officer observing the forlorn appearance of the boy, questioned him ; and happening to be acquainted with his uncle, took him home, and gave him some refreshments.—When he got on board, Capt. Suckling was not in the ship, nor had any person been apprised of the boy's coming. He paced the deck the whole remainder of the day, without being noticed by any one ; and it was not till the second day that somebody, as he expressed it, " took



compassion on him." The pain which is felt when first transplanted from our native soil,—when the living branch is cut from the parent tree,—is one of the most poignant which we have to endure through life. There are after griefs which wound more deeply, which leave behind them scars never to be effaced, which bruise the spirit, and sometimes break the heart: but never do we feel so keenly the want of love, the necessity of being loved, and the sense of utter desertion, as when we first leave the haven of home, and are, as it were, pushed off upon the stream of life. Added to these feelings, the seaboy has to endure physical hardships, and the privation of every comfort, even of sleep. Nelson had a feeble body and an affectionate heart, and he remembered through life his first days of wretchedness in the service.

The *Raisonné*, having been commissioned on account of the disputes respecting the Falkland Island, was paid off as soon as the difference with the court of Spain was accommodated, and Capt. Suckling was removed to the *Triumph*, seventy-four, then stationed as a guard-ship in the Thames. This was considered as too inactive a life for a boy, and Nelson was therefore sent a voyage to the West Indies in a merchant-ship, commanded by Mr. John Rathbone, an excellent seaman, who had served as master's mate under Capt. Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*. He returned a practical seaman, but with a hatred of the king's service, and a saying then common among the sailors—"aft the most honour: forward the better man." Rathbone had probably been disappointed and disgusted in the navy; and, with no unfriendly intentions, warned Nelson against a profession which he himself had found hopeless. His uncle received him on board the *Triumph* on his return, and discovering his dislike to the navy, took the best means of reconciling him to it. He held it out as a reward, that if he attended well to his navigation, he should go in the cutter and decked long-boat, which was attached to the commanding officer's ship at Chatham. Thus he became a good pilot for vessels of that description, from Chatham to the Tower, and down the Swin Channel to the North Foreland, and acquired a confidence among rocks and sands, of which he often felt the value.

Nelson had not been many months on board the *Triumph*, when his love of enterprise was excited by hearing that two ships were fitting out for a voyage of discovery towards the North Pole. In consequence of the difficulties which were expected on such a service, these vessels were to take out effective men instead of the usual number of boys. This, however, did not deter him from soliciting to be received, and, by his uncle's interest, he was admitted as coxswain under Capt. Lutwidge, second in command. The voyage was undertaken in compliance with an application from the Royal Society. The Hon. Capt. Constantine John Phipps, eldest son of Lord Mulgrave, volunteered his services. The *Racehorse* and *Carcass* bombs were selected, as the strongest ships, and, therefore, best adapted for such a voyage; and they were taken into dock and strengthened, to render them as secure as possible against the ice. Two masters of Greenlandmen were employed as



pilots for each ship. No expedition was ever more carefully fitted out; and the first Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Sandwich, with a laudable solicitude, went on board himself, before their departure, to see that every thing had been completed to the wish of the officers. The ships were provided with a simple and excellent apparatus for distilling fresh from salt water, the invention of Dr. Irving, who accompanied the expedition. It consisted merely in fitting a tube to the ship's kettle, and applying a wet mob to the surface as the vapour was passing. By these means from thirty-four to forty gallons were produced every day.

They sailed from the Nore on the 4th of June: on the 6th of the following month they were in lat. 79 deg. 56 min. 39 sec. E. The next day, about the place where most of the old discoverers had been stopped, the *Racehorse* was beset with ice: but they hove her through with ice anchors. Capt. Phipps continued ranging along the ice, northward and westward, till the 24th; he then tried to the eastward. On the 30th he was in lat. 80 deg. 13 min., lon. 18 deg. 48 min. E., among the islands and in the ice, with no appearance of an opening for the ships. The weather was exceedingly fine, mild, and unusually clear. Here they were becalmed in a large bay, with three apparent openings between the islands which formed it; but every where, as far as they could see, surrounded with ice. There was not a breath of air, the water was perfectly smooth, the ice covered with snow, low and even, except a few broken pieces, near the edge; and the pools of water in the middle of the ice-fields just crusted over with young ice. On the next day the ice closed upon them, and no opening was to be seen any where, except a hole or lake, as it might be called, about a mile and a half in circumference, where the ships lay fast to the ice with their ice anchors. They filled their casks with water from these ice-fields, which was very pure and soft. The men were playing on the ice all day; but the Greenland pilots, who were farther than they had ever been before, and considered that the seasons was far advancing, were alarmed at being thus beset.

The next day there was not the smallest opening; the ships were within less than two lengths of each other, separated by ice, and neither having room to turn. The ice, which the day before had been flat, and almost level with the water's edge, was now, in many places, forced higher than the main, by the pieces squeezing together. A day of thick fog followed: it was succeeded by clear weather; but the passage by which the ships had entered from the westward was closed, and no open water was in sight, either in that or any other quarter. By the pilot's advice, the men were set to cut a passage and warp through the small openings to the westward. They sawed through pieces of ice twelve feet thick; and this labour continued the whole day, during which their utmost efforts did not move the ship above three hundred yards; while they were driven, together with the ice, far to the N. E. and E. by the current. Sometimes a field of several acres square would be lifted up between two larger islands, and incorporated with them; and thus these larger pieces continued to grow by aggregation.



Another day passed, and there seemed no probability of getting the ships out, without a strong E. or N. E. wind. The season was far advanced, and every hour lessened the chance of extricating themselves. Young as he was, Nelson was appointed to command one of the boats which were sent out to explore a passage into the open water. It was the means of saving a boat belonging to the *Racehorse* from a singular but imminent danger. Some of the officers fired at and wounded a walrus. As no other animal has so human-like an expression in its countenance, so also is there none that seems to possess more of the passions of humanity. The wounded animal dived immediately, and brought up a number of its companions; and they all joined in an attack upon the boat. They wrested an oar from one of the men; and it was with the utmost difficulty that the crew could prevent them from staving or upsetting her, till the *Carcass's* boat came up; and the walruses, finding their enemies thus reinforced, dispersed. Young Nelson exposed himself in a more daring manner. One night, during the mid-watch, he stole from the ship with one of his comrades, taking advantage of a rising fog, and set off over the ice in pursuit of a bear. It was not long before they were missed. The fog thickened, and Capt. Lutwidge and his officers became exceedingly alarmed for their safety. Between three and four in the morning the weather cleared, and the two adventurers were seen at a considerable distance from the ship, attacking a huge bear. The signal for them to return was immediately made; Nelson's comrade called upon him to obey, but in vain; his musket had flashed in the pan; their ammunition was expended; and a chasm in the ice, which divided him from the bear, probably saved his life. "Never mind," he cried; "do but let me get a blow at the devil with the but-end of my musket, and we shall have him." Capt. Lutwidge, however, seeing his danger, fired a gun, which had the desired effect of frightening the beast; and the boy then returned, somewhat afraid of the consequences of his trespass. The captain reprimanded him sternly for conduct so unworthy of the office which he filled, and desired to know what motive he could have for hunting a bear. "Sir," said he, pouting his lips, as he was wont to do when agitated, "I wished to kill the bear, that I might carry the skin to my father."

A party were now sent to an island, about twelve miles off (named *Walden's Island* in the charts, from the midshipman who was intrusted with this service,) to see where the open water lay. They came back with information, that the ice, though closed all about them, was open to the westward, round the point by which they came in. They said also, that upon the island they had had a fresh east wind. This intelligence considerably abated the hopes of the crew; for were they lay it had been almost calm, and their main dependance had been upon the effect of an easterly wind in clearing the bay. There was but one alternative; either to wait the event of the weather upon the ships, or to betake themselves to the boats. The likelihood that it might be necessary to sacrifice the ships had been foreseen; the boats, accordingly, were adapted, both in number and size, to transport, in case of emer-



gency, the whole crew; and there were Dutch whalers upon the coast, in which they could all be conveyed to Europe. As for wintering where they were, that dreadful experiment had been already tried too often. No time was to be lost; the ships had driven into shoal water, having but fourteen fathoms. Should they, or the ice to which they were fast, take the ground, they must inevitably be lost: and at this time they were driving fast towards some rocks on the N. E. Captain Phipps sent for the officers of both ships, and told them his intention of preparing the boats for going away. They were immediately hoisted out, and the fitting begun. Canvass bread-bags were made, in case it should be necessary suddenly to desert the vessels; and men were sent with the lead-and-line to the northward and eastward, to sound wherever they found cracks in the ice, that they might have notice before the ice took the ground; for, in that case, the ships must instantly have been crushed or upset.

On the 7th of August they began to haul the boats over the ice, Nelson having command of the four-oared cutter. The men behaved excellently well, like true British seamen: they seemed reconciled to the thought of leaving the ships, and had full confidence in their officers. About noon, the ice appeared rather more open near the vessels; and as the wind was easterly, though there was but little of it, the sails were set, and they got about a mile to the westward. They moved very slowly, and were not now nearly so far to the westward as when they were first beset. However, all sail was kept upon them, to force them through whenever the ice slackened the least. Whatever exertions were made, it could not be possible to get the boats to the water edge before the 14th; and if the situation of the ships should not alter by that time, it would not be justifiable to stay longer by them. The commander therefore resolved to carry on both attempts together, moving the boats constantly, and taking every opportunity of getting the ships through. A party was sent out next day to the westward, to examine the state of the ice; they returned with tidings that it was very heavy and close, consisting chiefly of large fields.—The ships, however, moved something and the ice itself was drifting westward. There was a thick fog, so that it was impossible to ascertain what advantage had been gained. It continued on the 9th; but the ships were moved a little through some very small openings: the mist cleared off in the afternoon; and it was then perceived that they had driven much more than could have been expected to the westward, and that the ice itself had driven still farther. In the course of the day they got past the boats, and took them on board again. On the morrow the wind sprang up to the N. N. E. All sail was set, and the ships forced their way through a great deal of very heavy ice.—They frequently struck, and with such force, that one stroke broke the shank of the *Racehorse's* best bower anchor: but the vessels made way; and by noon they had cleared the ice, and were out at sea.—The next day they anchored in Smeerenberg harbour, close to that island of which the westernmost point is called Hadluyt's Headland, in honour of the great promoter and compiler of our English voyages of discovery.



Here they remained a few days, that the men might rest after their fatigue. No insect was to be seen in this dreary country, nor any species of reptile—not even the common earth-worm. Large bodies of ice, called icebergs, filled up the valleys between mountains, so dark, as, when contrasted with the snow, to appear black. The colour of the ice was of a lively light green. Opposite to the place where they fixed their observatory was one of these icebergs, above three hundred feet high. Its sides towards the sea was nearly perpendicular, and a stream of water issued from it. Large pieces frequently broke off, and rolled down into the sea. There was no thunder and lightning during the whole time they were in these latitudes. The sky was generally loaded with hard white clouds, from which it was never entirely free even in the clearest weather. They always knew when they were approaching the ice, long before they saw it, by a bright appearance near the horizon, which the Greenlandmen called the blink of the ice. The season was now so far advanced, that nothing more could have been attempted, if indeed any thing had been left untried: but the summer had been unusually favourable, and they had carefully surveyed the wall of ice extending for more than twenty degrees between the latitudes of 80deg. and 81deg. without the smallest appearance of any opening.

The ships were paid off shortly after their return to England; and Nelson was then placed by his uncle with Capt. Framer, in the *Sea-horse*, of twenty guns, then going out to the East Indies, in the squadron under Sir Edward Hughes. He was stationed in the foretop at watch and watch. His good conduct attracted the attention of the master (afterwards Captain Surridge) in whose watch he was; and, upon his recommendation, the captain rated him as midshipman. At this time his countenance was florid, and his appearance rather stout and athletic; but when he had been about eighteen months in India, he felt the effects of that climate, so perilous to European constitutions. The disease baffled all power of medicine; he was reduced almost to a skeleton; the use of his limbs was for some time entirely lost; and the only hope that remained was from a voyage home. Accordingly, he was brought home by Capt. Pigot, in the *Dolphin*: and had it not been for the attentive and careful kindness of that officer on the way, Nelson would never have lived to reach his native shores. He had formed an acquaintance with Sir Charles Pole, Sir Thomas Troubridge, and other distinguished officers, then, like himself, beginning their career: he had left them pursuing that career in full enjoyment of health and hope, and was returning from a country, in which all things were to him new and interesting, with a body broken down by sickness, and spirits which had sunk with his strength. Long afterward, when the name of Nelson was known as widely as that of England itself, he spoke of the feelings which he had at this time endured. “I felt impressed,” said he, “with a feeling that I should never rise in my profession. My mind was staggered with a view of the difficulties I had to surmount, and the little interest I possessed. I could discover no means of reaching the object of my ambition. After a long and gloomy reverie, in which I



almost wished myself overboard, a sudden glow of patriotism was kindled within me, and presented my king and country as my patron. 'Well, then,' I exclaimed, 'I will be a hero! and, confiding in Providence, I will brave every danger!'"

Long afterward, Nelson loved to speak of the feelings of that moment: and from that time, he often said, a radiant orb was suspended in his mind's eye, which urged him onward to renown. The state of mind in which these feelings begun, is what the mystics mean by their seasons of darkness and desertion. If the animal spirits fail, they represent it as an actual temptation. The enthusiasm of Nelson's nature had taken a different direction, but its essence was the same. He knew to what the previous state of dejection was to be attributed; that an enfeebled body, and a mind depressed, had cast this shade over his soul: but he always seemed willing to believe, that the sunshine which succeeded, bore with it a prophetic glory, and that the light which led him on, was "light from heaven."

His interest, however, was far better than he imagined. During his absence, Capt. Suckling had been made comptroller of the navy; his health had materially improved upon the voyage; and, as soon as the *Dolphin* was paid off, he was appointed acting-lieutenant in the *Worcester*, sixty-four, Capt. Mark Robinson, then going out with convoy to Gibraltar. Soon after his return, on the 8th of April, 1777, he passed his examination for a lieutenancy. Captain Suckling sat at the head of the board; and when the examination was ended, in a manner highly honourable to Nelson, rose from his seat, and introduced him to the examining captain as his nephew. They expressed their wonder that he had not informed them of this relationship before; he replied, that he did not wish the young man to be favoured: he knew his nephew would pass a good examination, and he had not been deceived. The next day Nelson received his commission as second lieutenant of the *Lowestoffe* frigate, Capt. William Locker, then fitting out for Jamaica.

American and French privateers under American colours were at that time harassing our trade in the West Indies: even a frigate was not sufficiently active for Nelson, and he frequently got appointed to one of the *Lowstoffs's* tenders. During one of their cruises, the *Lowestoffe* captured an American letter-of-marque: it was blowing a gale, and a heavy sea running. The first Lieutenant being ordered to board the prize, went below to put on his hanger. It happened to be mislaid; and, while he was seeking it, Capt. Locker came on deck. Perceiving the boat still alongside, and in danger every moment of being swamped, and being extremely anxious that the privateer should be instantly taken in charge, because he feared that it would otherwise founder, he exclaimed, "Have I no officer in the ship who can board the prize?" Nelson did not offer himself immediately, waiting, with his usual sense of propriety, for the first lieutenant's return; but hearing the master volunteer, he jumped into the boat, saying, "It is my turn now; and if I come back it is yours." The American, who had carried a heavy press of sail, in hope of escaping, was so completely water-logged, that



the Lowestoffe's boat went in on deck, and out again with the sea.

About this time he lost his uncle. Captain Locker, however, who had perceived the excellent qualities of Nelson, and formed a friendship for him, which continued during his life, recommended him warmly to Sir Peter Parker, then commander-in-chief upon that station. In consequence of this recommendation he was removed into the Bristol flag-ship, and Lieutenant Cuthbert Collingwood, who had long been in habits of great friendship with him, succeeded him in the Lowstoffe. Sir Peter Parker was the friend of both; and thus it happened, that whenever Nelson got a step in rank, Collingwood succeeded him. The former soon became first lieutenant; and, on the 8th of Dec., 1788, was appointed commander of the Badger brig; Collingwood taking his place in the Bristol. While the Badger was lying in Montego Bay, Jamaica, the Glasgow of twenty guns came in and anchored there, and in two hours was in flames, the steward having set fire to her while stealing rum out of the after-hold. Her crew were leaping into the water, when Nelson came up in his boats, made them throw their powder overboard, and point their guns upward: and, by his presence of mind and personal exertions, prevented the loss of life which would otherwise have ensued. On the 11th of June, 1779, he was made post into the Hinchinbrook, of twenty-eight guns, an enemy's merchantman, sheathed with wood, which had been taken into the service. Collingwood was then made commander into the Badger. A short time after he left the Lowstoffe, that ship, with a small squadron, stormed the fort of St. Fernando de Omoa, on the south side of the Bay of Honduras, and captured some register ships which were lying under its guns. Two hundred and fifty quintals of quicksilver and three millions of piasters were the rewards of the enterprize: and it is characteristic of Nelson, that the chance by which he missed a share of such a prize is never mentioned in any of his letters; nor is it likely that it ever excited even a momentary feeling of vexation.

Nelson was fortunate in possessing good interest at the time when it could be most serviceable to him: his promotion had been almost as rapid as it could be; and before he had attained the age of twenty-one he had gained that rank which brought all the honours of the service within his reach. No opportunity, indeed, had yet been given him of distinguishing himself; but he was thoroughly master of his profession, and his zeal and ability were acknowledged wherever he was known. Count d'Estaing, with a fleet of one hundred and twenty-five sail, men of war and transports, and a reputed force of five-and-twenty thousand men, threatened Jamaica from St Domingo. Nelson offered his services to the admiral and to Governor-general Dalling, and was appointed to command the batteries of Fort Charles, at Port Royal. Not more than seven thousand men could be mustered for the defence of the island, —a number wholly inadequate to resist the force which threatened them. Of this Nelson was so well aware, that when he wrote to his friends in England, he told them they must not be surprised to hear of his learning to speak French. D'Estaing, however, was either not a-



ware of his own superiority, or not equal to the command with which he was intrusted ; he attempted nothing with this formidable armament ; and General Dalling was thus left to execute a project which he had formed against the Spanish Colonies.

This project was, to take Fort San Juan, on the river of that name, which flows from Lake Nicaragua into the Atlantic ; make himself master of the lake itself, and of the cities of Granada and Leon ; and thus cut off the communication of the Spaniards between their northern and Southern possessions in America. Here it is that a canal between the two seas may most easily be formed ;—a work more important in its consequences than any which has ever yet been effected by human power. Lord George Germaine, at that time Secretary of state for the American department approved the plan : and as discontentments were known at that time to prevail in the Nuevo Reyno, in Pompayan, and in Peru, the more sanguine part of the English began to dream of acquiring an empire in one part of America more extensive than that which they were on the point of losing in another. General Dalling's plans were well formed ; but the history and the nature of the country had not been studied as accurately as its geography : the difficulties which occurred in fitting out the expedition delayed it till the season was too far advanced ; and the men were thus sent to adventure themselves, not so much against an enemy, whom they would have beaten, as against a climate, which would do the enemy's work.

Early in the year 1780, five hundred men designed for this service, were conveyed by Nelson from Port Royal to Cape Gracias a Dios, in Honduras. Not a native was to be seen when they landed : they had been taught that the English came with no other intent than that of enslaving them, and sending them to Jamaica. After a while, however, one of them ventured down, confiding in his knowledge of one of the party ; and by his means the neighboring tribes were conciliated with presents, and brought in. The troops were encamped in a swampy and unwholesome plain, where they were joined by a party of the seventy ninth regiment, from Black River, who were already in a deplorable state of sickness. Having remained here a month, they proceeded, anchoring frequently along the Mosquito shore, to collect their Indian allies, who were to furnish proper boats for the river, and to accompany them. They reached the river San Juan, March 24th : and here, according to his orders, Nelson's services were to terminate ; but not a man in the expedition had ever been up the river, or knew the distance of any fortification from its mouth : and he, not being one to turn back when so much was to be done, resolved to carry the soldiers up. About two hundred, therefore, were embarked in the Mosquito shore craft, and in two of the Hinchinbrook's boats, and they began their voyage. It was the latter end of the dry season, the worst time for such an expedition ; the river was consequently low : Indians were sent forward through narrow channels between shoals and sand banks, and the men were frequently obliged to quit the boats, and exert their utmost strength to drag or thrust them along. This labour continued



for several days when they came into deeper water, they had then currents and rapids to contend with, which would have been insurmountable, but for the skill of the Indians in such difficulties. The brunt of the labour was borne by them and by the sailors—men never accustomed to stand aloof when any exertion of strength or hardihood is required. The soldiers less accustomed to rely upon themselves, were of little use. But all equally endured the heat of the sun, rendered more intense by being reflected from the white shoals, while the high woods, on both sides of the river, were frequently so close, as to prevent any refreshing circulation of air; and during the night all were equally exposed to the heavy and unwholesome dews.

On the 9th of April they reached an island in the river, called St. Bartholomeo, which the Spaniards had fortified, as an outpost, with a small semicircular battery, mounting nine or ten swivels, and manned with sixteen or eighteen men. It commanded the river in a rapid and difficult part of the navigation. Nelson, at the head of a few of his seamen leaped upon the beach. The ground upon which he sprung was so muddy, that he had some difficulty in extricating himself, and lost his shoes: barefooted, however, he advanced, and, in his own phrase, *boarded the battery*. In this resolute attempt he was bravely supported by Despard, at that time a captain in the army, afterward unhappily known for his schemes of revolutionary treason. The castle of St. Juan is situated about sixteen miles higher up: the stores and ammunition, however, were landed a few miles below the castle, and the men had to march through woods almost impassable. One of the men was bitten under the eye by a snake, which darted upon him from the bough of a tree. He was unable to proceed from the violence of the pain: and when, after a short while some of his comrades were sent back to assist him, he was dead, and the body already putrid. Nelson himself narrowly escaped a similar fate. He had ordered his hammock to be slung under some trees, being excessively fatigued, and was sleeping, when a monitory lizard passed across his face. The Indians happily observing the reptile, and, knowing what it indicated, awoke him. He started up, and found one of the deadliest serpents of the country coiled up at his feet. He suffered from poison of another kind; for, drinking at a spring in which some boughs of the manchineel had been thrown, the effects were so severe, as, in the opinion of some of his friends, to inflict a lasting injury upon his constitution.

The castle of St. Juan is thirty-two miles below the Lake of Nicaragua, from which it issues, and sixty-nine from the mouth of the river. Boats reach the sea from thence in a day and a half; but their navigation back, even when unladen, is the labour of nine days. The English appeared before it on the 11th, two days after they had taken St. Bartolomeo. Nelson's advice was, that it should instantly be carried by assault; but Nelson was not the commander; and it was thought proper to observe all the formalities of a siege. Ten days were wasted before this could be commenced: it was a work more of fatigue than of danger; but fatigue was more to be dreaded than the enemy; the rains set in; and, could not the garrison have held out a little lon-



ger, disease would have rid them of their invaders. Even the Indians sunk under it, the victims of unusual exertion, and of their own excesses. The place surrendered on the 24th. But victory procured to the conquerors none of that relief which had been expected; the castle was worse than a prison; and it contained nothing which could contribute to the recovery of the sick, or the preservation of those who were yet unaffected. The huts, which served for hospitals, were surrounded with filth, and with the putrefying hides of slaughtered cattle—almost sufficient of themselves to have engendered pestilence; and when, at last, orders were given to erect a convenient hospital, the contagion had become so general, that there were none who could work at it; for, besides the few who were able to perform garrison duty, there were not orderly men enough to assist the sick. Added to these evils, there was the want of all needful remedies; for, though the expedition had been amply provided with hospital stores, river craft enough had not been procured for transporting the requisite baggage; and when much was to be left behind, provision for sickness was that which of all things men in health would be most ready to leave. Now, when these medicines were required, the river was swollen, and so turbulent, that its upward navigation was almost impracticable. At length, even the task of burying the dead was more than the living could perform, and the bodies were tossed into the stream, or left for beasts of prey, and for the gallinazos—those dreadful carrion birds, which do not always wait for death before they begin their work. Five months the English persisted in what may be called this war against nature; they then left a few men, who seemed proof against the climate, to retain the castle till the Spaniards should choose to retake it, and make them prisoners. The rest abandoned their baleful conquest. Eighteen hundred men were sent to different posts upon this wretched expedition: not more than three hundred and eighty ever returned. The Hinchinbrook's complement consisted of two hundred men; eighty-seven took to their beds in one night; and of the whole crew not more than ten survived.

The transport's men all died, and some of the ships, having none left to take care of them, sunk in the harbour: but transport ships were not wanted, for the troops which they had brought were no more; they had fallen, not by the hand of an enemy, but by the deadly influence of the climate.

Nelson himself was saved by a timely removal. In a few days after the commencement of the siege he was seized with the prevailing dysentery; meantime, Capt Clover (son of the author of *Leonidas*) died, and Nelson was appointed to succeed him in the *Janus*, of forty-four guns; Collingwood being then made post into the *Hinchinbrook*. He returned to the harbour the day before *St. Juan* surrendered, and immediately sailed for Jamaica in the sloop which brought the news of his appointment. He was, however, so greatly reduced by the disorder, that when they reached Port Royal he was carried ashore in his cot; and finding himself, after a partial amendment, unable to retain the command of his new ship, he was compelled to ask leave to return to England, as the only means of recovery. Capt. (afterward Admiral) Cornwallis took him home in the *Lion*; and to his care and kindness Nelson believed himself indebted for his life. He went immediately to Bath, in a miserable state; so helpless, that he was carried to and



from his bed; and the act of moving him produced the most violent pain. In three months he recovered, and immediately hastened to London, and applied for employment. After an interval of about four months he was appointed to the *Albemarle*, of twenty-eight guns, a French merchant-man, which had been purchased from the captors for the king's service.

His health was not yet thoroughly re-established; and while he was employed in getting his ship ready, he again became so ill as hardly to be able to keep out of bed. Yet in this state, still suffering from the fatal effect of a West Indian climate, as if, it might almost be supposed, he said, to try his constitution, he was sent to the North Seas, and kept there the whole winter. The asperity with which he mentioned this so many years afterward, evinces how deeply he resented a mode of conduct equally cruel to the individual and detrimental to the service. It was during the armed neutrality; and when they anchored off Elsinore, the Danish Admiral sent on board, desiring to be informed what ships had arrived, and to have their force written down. "The *Albemarle*," said Nelson to the messenger, "is one of his Britannic Majesty's ship: you are at liberty, sir, to count the guns as you go down the side; and you may assure the Danish Admiral, that, if necessary, they shall all be well served." During this voyage he gained a considerable knowledge of the Danish coast, and its soundings: greatly to the advantage of his country in after-times. The *Albemarle* was not a good ship, and was several times nearly overset, in consequence of the masts having been made much too long for her. On her return to England they were shortened, and some other improvements made at Nelson's suggestion. Still he always insisted that her first owners, the French, had taught her to run away, as she was never a good sailer, except when going directly before the wind.

On their return to the Downs, while he was ashore visiting the senior officer, there came on so heavy a gale, that almost all the vessels drove, and a store-ship came athwart-hawse of the *Albemarle*. Nelson feared she would drive on the Goodwin Sands: he ran to the beach; but even the Deal boatmen thought it impossible to get on board, such was the violence of the storm. At length, some of the most intrepid offered to make the attempt for fifteen guineas; and to the astonishment and fear of all the beholders, he embarked during the height of the tempest. With great difficulty and imminent danger he succeeded in reaching her. She lost her bowsprit and foremast, but escaped farther injury. He was now ordered to Quebec; where, his surgeon told him, he would certainly be laid up by the climate. Many of his friends urged him to represent this to Admiral Keppel: but, having received his orders from Lord Sandwich, there appeared to him an indelicacy in applying to his successor to have them altered.

Accordingly, he sailed for Canada. During her first cruise on that station, the *Albemarle* captured a fishing schooner which contained, in her cargo, nearly all the property that her master possessed, and the poor fellow had a large family at home, anxiously expecting him.—Nelson employed him as a pilot in Boston Bay, then restored him the schooner and cargo, and gave him a certificate to secure him against being captured by any other vessel. The man came off afterward to the *Albemarle*, at the hazard of his life, with a present of sheep, poultry, and fresh provisions. A most valuable supply it proved; for the



scurvy was raging on board: this was in the middle of August, and the ship's company had not had a fresh meal since the beginning of April. The certificate was preserved at Boston in memory of an act of unusual generosity; and now that the fame of Nelson has given interest to every thing connected with his name, it is regarded as a relic. The Albemarle had a narrow escape upon this cruise. Four French sail of the line and a frigate, which had come out of Boston harbour, gave chase to her; and Nelson, perceiving that they beat him in sailing, boldly ran among the numerous shoals of St. George's Bank, confiding in his own skill in pilotage. Capt. Salter, in the St. Margaretta, had escaped the French fleet, by a similar manœuvre, not long before. The frigate alone continued warily to pursue him; but as soon as he perceived that his enemy was unsupported, he shortened sail, and hove to: upon which the Frenchman thought it advisable to give over the pursuit, and sail in quest of his consorts.

At Quebec Nelson became acquainted with Alexander Davison; by whose interference he was prevented from making what would have been called an imprudent marriage. The Albemarle was about to leave the station, her captain had taken leave of his friends, and was gone down the river to the place of anchorage; when, the next morning, as Davison was walking on the beach, to his surprise he saw Nelson coming back in his boat. Upon inquiring the cause of his re-appearance, Nelson took his arm, to walk towards the town, and told him he found it utterly impossible to leave Quebec without again seeing the woman whose society had contributed so much to this happiness there, and offering her his hand.—“If you do,” said his friend, “your utter ruin must inevitably follow.”—“Then let it follow,” cried Nelson, “for I am resolved to do it.”—“And I,” replied Davison, “am resolved you shall not.” Nelson, however, upon this occasion was less resolute than his friends, and suffered himself to be led back to the boat.

The Albemarle was under orders to convey a fleet of transports to New York.—“A pretty job,” said her captain, “at this last season of the year” (October was far advanced), “for our sails are at this moment frozen to the yards.” On his arrival at Sandy Hook, he waited on the commander-in-chief, Admiral Digby, who told him he was come on a fine station for making prize-money. “Yes, sir,” Nelson made answer; “but the West Indies is the station for honor.” Lord Hood, with a detachment of Rodney's victorious fleet, was at that time at Sandy Hook: he had been intimate with Capt. Suckling; and Nelson, who was desirous of nothing but honour, requested him to ask for the Albemarle, that he might go to that station where it was most likely to be obtained. Admiral Digby reluctantly parted with him. His professional merit was already well known: and Lord Hood, on introducing him to Prince William Henry, as the Duke of Clarence was then called, told the prince, if he wished to ask any questions respecting naval tactics, Captain Nelson could give him as much information as any officer in the fleet. The Duke, who, to his own honour, became the firm friend of Nelson, describes him as appearing the merest boy of a captain he had ever seen, dressed in a full laced uniform, an old-fashioned waistcoat with long flaps, and his lank unpowdered hair tied



in a stiff Hessian tail of extraordinary length; making altogether so remarkable a figure, "that," says the Duke, "I had never seen any thing like it before, nor could I imagine who he was, nor what he came about. But his address and conversation were irresistibly pleasing; and when he spoke on professional subjects, it was with an enthusiasm that showed he was no common being."

It was expected that the French would attempt some of the passages between the Bahamas; and Lord Hood, thinking of this, said to Nelson, "I suppose, sir, from the length of time you was cruising among the Bahama Keys, you must be a good pilot there." He replied, with that constant readiness to render justice to every man which was so conspicuous in all his conduct through life, that he was well acquainted with them himself, but that in that respect his second lieutenant was far his superior. The French got into Puerto Cabello on the coast of Venezuela. Nelson was cruising between that port and Laguary, under French colours, for the purpose of obtaining information; when a king's launch, belonging to the Spaniards, passed near, and being hailed in French, came alongside without suspicion, and answered all questions that were asked concerning the number and force of the enemy's ships. The crew, however, were not a little surprised when they were taken on board, and found themselves prisoners. One of the party went by the name of Count de Deux Ponts. He was, however, a prince of the German empire, and brother to the heir of the Electorate of Bavaria: his companions were French officers of distinction, and men of science, who had been collecting specimens in the various branches of natural history. Nelson, having entertained them with the best his table could afford, told them they were at liberty to depart with their boat and all that it contained: he only required them to promise that they would consider themselves prisoners, if the commander-in-chief refused to acquiesce in their being thus liberated—a circumstance which was not likely by any means to happen. Tidings soon arrived that the preliminaries of peace had been signed; and the Albermarle returned to England, and was paid off. Nelson's first business, after he got to London, even before he went to see his relations, was to attempt to get the wages due to his men, for the various ships in which they had served during the war. "The disgust of seamen to the navy," he said, "was all owing to the infernal plea of turning them over from ship to ship; so that men could not be attached to the officers, nor the officers care the least about the men." Yet he himself was so much beloved by the men, that his whole ship's company offered, if he could get a ship, to enter for her immediately. He was now, for the first time, presented at court. After going through this ceremony, he dined with his friend Davison, at Lincoln's Inn. As soon as he entered the chamber, he threw off what he called his iron-bound coat; and putting himself at ease in a dressing-gown, passed the remainder of the day in talking over all that had befallen them since they parted on the shore of the River St. Lawrence.



## CHAPTER II.

*Nelson goes to France during the Peace—Reappointed to the Boreas, and stationed at the Leeward Islands—His firm Conduct concerning the American Interlopers and the Contractors—Marries, and returns to England—Is on the Point of quitting the Service in Disgust—Manner of Life when unemployed—Appointed to the Agamemnon on the breaking out of the War of the French Revolution.*

"I HAVE closed the war," said Nelson, in one of his letters, "without a fortune; but there is not a speck in my character. True honour, I hope, predominates in my mind far above riches." He did not apply for a ship, because he was not wealthy enough to live on board in the manner which was then become customary. Finding it, therefore, prudent to economize on his half-pay during the peace, he went to France, in company with Capt. Macnamara, of the navy, and took lodgings at St. Omer's. The death of his favourite sister Anne, who died in consequence of going out of the ball-room, at Bath, when heated with dancing, affected his father so much, that it had nearly occasioned him to return in a few weeks. Time, however, and reason, and religion, overcame this grief in the old man; and Nelson remained at St. Omer's long enough to fall in love with the daughter of an English clergyman. This second attachment appears to have been less ardent than the first; for, upon weighing the evils of a straitened income to a married man, he thought it better to leave France, assigning to his friends something in his accounts as the cause. This prevented him from accepting an invitation from the Count of Deux Ponts to visit him at Paris, couched in the handsomest terms of acknowledgment for the treatment which he had received on board the Albemarle.

The self-constraint which Nelson exerted in subduing this attachment made him naturally desire to be at sea: and when, upon visiting Lord Howe at the Admiralty, he was asked if he wished to be employed, he made answer that he did. Accordingly, in March, he was appointed to the Boreas, twenty-eight guns, going to the Leeward Islands, as cruiser on the peace establishment. Lady Hughes and her family went out with them to Admiral Sir Richard Hughes, who commanded on that station. His ship was full of young midshipmen, of whom there were not less than thirty on board: and happy were they whose lot it was to be placed with such a captain. If he perceived that a boy was afraid at first going aloft, he would say to him in a friendly manner: "Well, sir, I am going a race to mast-head, and beg that I may meet you there." The poor little fellow instantly began to climb, and got up how he could—Nelson never noticed in what manner; but when they met in the top, spoke cheerfully to him; and would say how much any person was to be pitied who fancied that getting up was either dangerous or difficult. Every day he went into the school room, to see that they were pursuing their nautical studies; and at noon he was always the first on deck with his quadrant. Whenever he paid a visit of ceremony, some of these youths accompanied him: and when he went to dine with the governor at Barbadoes, he took one of them in his hand, and



presented him, saying, "Your Excellency must excuse me for bringing one of my midshipmen. I make it a rule to introduce them to all the good company I can, as they have few to look up to, beside myself, during the time they are at sea."

When Nelson arrived in the West Indies he found himself senior captain, and consequently second in command on that station. Satisfactory as this was, it soon involved him in a dispute with the Admiral, which a man less zealous for the service might have avoided. He found the *Latona* in English Harbour, Antigua, with a broad penant hoisted; and, upon inquiring the reason, was presented with an order from Sir Richard Hughes, requiring and directing him to obey the orders of resident commissioner Moutray, during the time he might have occasion to stay there; the said resident commissioner being, in consequence, authorized to hoist a broad penant on board any of his Majesty's ships in that port that he might think proper. Nelson was never at a loss how to act in any emergency. "I know of no superior officers," said he, "besides the lords commissioners of Admiralty, and my seniors on the post list." Concluding, therefore, that it was not consistent with the service for a resident commissioner, who held only a civil situation, to hoist a broad penant, the moment that he had anchored, he sent an order to the captain of the *Latona* to strike it, and return it to the dock-yard. He went on shore the same day, dined with the commissioner, to show him that he was actuated by no other motives than a sense of duty, and gave him the first intelligence that his penant had been struck. Sir Richard sent an account of this to the Admiralty; but the case could admit of no doubt, and Captain Nelson's conduct was entirely approved.

He displayed the same promptitude on another occasion. While in the *Boreas*, after the hurricane months were over, was riding at anchor in Nevis Rhodes, a French frigate passed to leeward, close along shore. Nelson had obtained information that this ship was sent from Martinico, with two general officers and some engineers on board, to take a survey of our sugar islands. This purpose he was determined to prevent them from executing, and therefore he gave orders to follow them. The next day he came up with them at anchor in the roads of St. Eustatia, and anchored about two cable's length on the frigate's quarter. Being afterward invited by the Dutch governor to meet the French officers at dinner, he seized that occasion of assuring the French captain, that understanding it was his intention to honour the British possessions with a visit, he had taken the earliest opportunity in his power to accompany him, in his Majesty's ship the *Boreas*, in order that such attention might be paid to the officers of his most Christian Majesty, as every Englishman in the islands would be proud to show. The French, with equal courtesy, protested against giving him this trouble; especially, they said, as they intended merely to cruise round the islands, without landing on any. But Nelson, with the utmost politeness, insisted upon paying them this compliment, followed them close, in spite of all their attempts to elude his vigilance, and ne-



ver lost sight of them; till, finding it imposssble either to deceive or escape him, they gave up their treacherous purpose in despair, and beat up for Martinico.

A business of more serious import soon engaged his attention. The Americans were at this time trading with our islands, taking advantage of the register of their ships, which had been issued while they were British subjects. Nelson knew, that by the navigation-act, no foreigners, directly or indirectly, are permitted to carry on any trade with these possessions: he knew, also, that the Americans had made themselves foreigners with regard to England; they had disregarded the ties of blood and language when they acquired the independence which they had been led on to claim, unhappily for themselves, before they were fit for it; and he was resolved that they should derive no profit from those ties now. Foreigners they had made themselves, and as foreigners they were to be treated. "If once," said he, "they are admitted to any kind of Intercourse with our islands, the views of the loyalists, in settling at Nova Scotia, are entirely done away; and when we are again ombroiled in a French war, the Americans will first become the carriers of these colonies, and then have possession of them. Here they come, sell their cargoes for ready money, go to Martinico, buy molasses, and so round and round. The loyalist cannot do this, and consequently must sell a little dearer. The residents here are Americans by connexion and by interest, and are inimical to Great Britain. They are as great rebels as ever were in America, had they the power to show it." In November, when the squadron, having arrived at Barbadoes, was to separate, with no other orders than those for examining anchorages, and the usual inquiries concerning wood and water, Nelson asked his friend Collingwood, then captain of the *Mediator*, whose opinions he knew upon the subject, to accompany him to the Commander-in-Chief: whom he then respectfully asked, whether they were not to attend to the commerce of the country, and see that the navigation-act was respected—that appearing to him to be the intent of keeping men-of-war upon this station in time of peace? Sir Richard Hughes replied, he had no particular orders, neither had the Admiralty sent him any acts of parliament. But Nelson made answer, that the navigation-act was included in the statutes of the Admiralty, with which every captain was furnished, and that act was directed to admirals, captains, &c., to see it carried into execution. Sir Richard said he had never seen the book. Upon this Nelson produced the statutes, read the words of the act, and apparently convinced the commander-in-chief, that men-of-war, as he said, "were sent abroad for some other purpose than to be made a show of." Accordingly, orders were given to enforce the navigation-act.

Major-general Sir Thomas Shirley was at this time governor of the Leeward Islands; and when Nelson waited on him to inform him how he intended to act, and upon what grounds, he replied, that "old generals were not in the habit of taking advice from young gentlemen."—"Sir," said the young officer, with that confidence in himself which never carried him too far, and always was equal to the occasion; "I am as old as the prime minister of England, and think myself as capable of commanding one of his Majesty's ships as that Minister is of go-



verning the state." He was resolved to do his duty, whatever might be the opinion or conduct of others : and when he arrived upon his station at St. Kitt's, he sent away all the Americans, not choosing to seize them before they had been well apprized that the act would be carried into effect, lest it might seem as if a trap had been laid for them. The Americans, though they prudently decamped from St. Kitt's, were emboldened by the support they met with, and resolved to resist his orders, alleging that king's ships had no legal power to seize them without having deputations from the customs. The planters were to a man against him : the governors and the presidents of the different islands, with only a single exception, gave him no support : and the admiral, afraid to act on either side, yet wishing to oblige the planters, sent him a note, advising him to be guided by the wishes of the president of the council. There was no danger in disregarding this, as it came unofficially, and in the form of advice. But scarcely a month after he had shown Sir Richard Hughes the law, and, as he supposed, satisfied him concerning it, he received an order from him, stating that he had now obtained good advice upon the point, and the Americans were not to be hindered from coming, and having free egress and regress if the governor chose to permit them. An order to the same purport had been sent round to the different governors and presidents ; and General Shirley and others informed him, in an authoritative manner, that they chose to admit American ships, as the commander-in-chief had left the decision to them. These persons, in his own words, he soon " trimmed up, and silenced ;" but it was a more delicate business to deal with the admiral. " I must either," said he, " disobey my orders, or disobey acts of Parliament. I determined upon the former, trusting to the uprightness of my intentions, and believing that my country would not let me be ruined for protecting her commerce." With this determination he wrote to Sir Richard, appealed again to the plain, literal, unequivocal sense of the navigation-act ; and in respectful language told him, he felt it his duty to decline obeying these orders till he had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with him. Sir Richard's first feeling was that of anger, and he was about to supersede Nelson : but having mentioned the affair to his captain, that officer told him, he believed all the squadron thought the orders illegal, and therefore did not know how far they were bound to obey them.—It was impossible, therefore, to bring Nelson, to a court-martial, composed of men who agreed with him in opinion upon the point in dispute ; and luckily, though the admiral wanted vigour of mind to decide upon what was right, he was not obstinate in wrong, and had even generosity enough in his nature to thank Nelson afterward for having shown him his error.

Collingwood, in the *Mediator*, and his brother, Wilfred Collingwood, in the *Rattler*, actively co-operated with Nelson. The custom-houses were informed, that after a certain day all foreign vessels found in the ports would be seized ; and many were, in consequence seized, and condemned in the Admiralty court. When the *Boreas* arrived at Nevis, she found 4 American vessels deeply laden, and what are called the island-colours flying—white, with a red cross. They were ordered to hoist their proper flag, and depart within eight-and-forty hours, but they refused to obey, denying that they were Americans. Some of their crews were then examined in Nelson's cabin, where the judge of Admiralty



happened to be present. The case was plain; they confessed that they were Americans, and that the ships, hull and cargo, were wholly American property; upon which he seized them. This raised a storm: the planters, the custom-house, and the governor were all against him. Subscriptions were opened, and presently filled, for the purpose of carrying on the cause in behalf of the American captains: and the admiral, whose flag was at that time in the roads, stood neutral. But the Americans and their abettors were not content with defensive law. The marines, whom he had sent to secure the ships, had prevented some of the masters from going ashore; and those persons, by whose depositions it appeared that the vessels and cargoes were American property, declared, that they had given their testimony under bodily fear, for that a man with a drawn sword in his hand had stood over them the whole time. A rascally lawyer, whom the party employed, suggested this story; and as the sentry at the cabin door was a man with a drawn sword, the Americans made no scruple of swearing to this ridiculous falsehood, and commencing prosecutions against him accordingly. They laid their damages at the enormous amount of £40,000; and Nelson was obliged to keep close on board his own ship, lest he should be arrested for a sum for which it would have been impossible to find bail. The marshal frequently came on board to arrest him, but was always prevented by the address of the first lieutenant, Mr. Wallis. Had he been taken, such was the temper of the people, that he would have been cast for the whole sum. One of his officers, one day, in speaking of the restraint which he was thus compelled to suffer, happened to use the word *pity*! "Pitty!" exclaimed Nelson; "Pity! did you say? I live, sir, to be envied! and to that point I shall always direct my course." Eight weeks he remained under this state of duress. During that time the trial respecting these detained ships came on in the court of Admiralty. He went on shore under a protection for the day from the judge: but, notwithstanding this, the marshal was called upon to take that opportunity of arresting him, and the merchants promised to indemnify him for so doing. The judge, however, did his duty, and threatened to send the marshal to prison, if he attempted to violate the protection of the court. Mr. Herbert, the president of Nevis, behaved with singular generosity upon this occasion. Though no man was a greater sufferer by the measures which Nelson had pursued, he offered in court to become his bail for £10,000, if he chose to suffer the arrest. The lawyer whom he had chosen proved to be an able as well as an honest man; and, notwithstanding the opinions and pleadings of most of the counsel of different islands, who maintained that ships of war were not justified in seizing American vessels without a deputation from the customs, the law was so explicit, the case so clear, and Nelson pleaded his own cause so well, that the four ships were condemned. During the progress of this business he sent a memorial home to the king: in consequence of which, orders were issued that he should be defended at the expence of the crown. And upon the representations which he made at the same time to the secretary of state, and the suggestions with which he accompanied it, the register-act was framed. The sanction of government, and the approbation of his conduct which it implied, were highly gratifying to him:



but he was offended, and not without just cause, that the treasury should have transmitted thanks to the commander-in-chief, for his activity and zeal in protecting the commerce of Great Britain. "Had they known all," said he, "I do not think they would have bestowed thanks in that quarter, and neglected me. I feel much hurt, that, after the loss of health and risk of fortune, another should be thanked for what I did against his orders. I either deserved to be sent out of the service, or at least to have some little notice taken of what I had done. They have thought it worthy of notice, and yet have neglected me. If this is the reward of a faithful discharge of my duty, I shall be careful, and never stand forward again. But I have done my duty and have nothing to accuse myself of."

The anxiety which he had suffered from the harrassing uncertainties of law is apparent from these expressions. He had, however, something to console him, for he was at this time wooing the niece of his friend the president, then in her eighteenth year, the widow of Dr. Nisbet, a physician. She had one child, a son, by name Josiah, who was three years old. One day, Mr. Herbert, who had hastened, half-dressed, to receive Nelson, exclaimed, on returning to his dressing-room, "Good God! if I did not find that great little man, of whom every body is so afraid, playing in the next room, under the dining-table, with Mrs. Nisbet's child!" A few days afterward Mrs. Nisbet herself was first introduced to him, and thanked him for the partiality which he had shown to her little boy. Her manners were mild and winning: and the captain, whose heart was easily susceptible of attachment, found no such imperious necessity for subduing his inclinations as had twice before withheld him from marrying. They were married on March 11th, 1787: Prince William Henry, who had come out to the West Indies the preceding winter, being present, by his own desire, to give away the bride. Mr. Herbert, her uncle, was at this time so much displeased with his only daughter, that he had resolved to disinherit her, and leave his whole fortune, which was very great, to his niece. But Nelson, whose nature was too noble to let him profit by an act of injustice, interfered, and succeeded in reconciling the president to his child.

"Yesterday," said one of his naval friends the day after the wedding, "the navy lost one of its greatest ornaments, by Nelson's marriage. It is a national loss that such an officer should marry; had it not been for this, Nelson would have become the greatest man in the service." The man was rightly estimated: but he who delivered this opinion did not understand the effect of domestic love and duty upon a mind of the true heroic stamp.

"We are often separate," said Nelson, in a letter to Mrs. Nisbet a few months before their marriage; "but our affections are not by any means on that account diminished. Our country has the first demand for our services; and private convenience our happiness must ever give way to the public good. Duty is the great business of a sea officer: all private considerations must give way to it, however painful."—"Have you not often heard," says he, in another letter, "that salt water and absence always will wash away love? Now I am such a heretic as not to believe that article: for behold, every morning I have had six pails of salt water poured upon my head, and instead of find-



ing what seamen say to be true, it goes soon contrary to the prescription, that you must, perhaps, see me before the fixed time." More frequently his correspondence breathed a deeper strain. "To write letters to you," says he, "is the next greatest pleasure I feel to receiving them from you. What I experience when I read such as I am sure are the pure sentiments of your heart, my poor pen cannot express:—nor, indeed, would I give much for any pen or head which could express feelings of that kind. Absent from you, I feel no pleasure: it is you who are every thing to me. Without you, I care not for this world; for I have found, lately, nothing in it but vexation and trouble. These are my present sentiments. God Almighty grant they may never change! Nor do I think they will. Indeed there is, as far as human knowledge can judge, a moral certainty that they cannot: for it must be real affection that brings us together; not interest or compulsion. Such were the feelings, and such the sense of duty, with which Nelson became a husband.

During his stay upon this station he had ample opportunity of observing the scandalous practices of the contractors, prize-agents, and other persons in the West Indies connected with the naval service.—When he was first left with the command, and bills were brought him to sign for money which was owing for goods purchased for the navy, he required the original voucher, that he might examine whether those goods had been really purchased at the market price: but to produce vouchers would not have been convenient, and therefore was not the custom. Upon this, Nelson wrote to Sir Charles Middleton, then comptroller of the navy, representing the abuses which were likely to be practised in this manner. The answer which he received seemed to imply that the old forms were thought sufficient: and thus having no alternative, he was compelled, with his eyes open, to submit to a practice originating in fraudulent intentions. Soon afterward two Antigua merchants informed him, that they were privy to great frauds, which had been committed upon government in various departments; at Antigua, to the amount of nearly £500,000; at Lucie, £300,000; at Barbadoes, £250,000; at Jamaica, upwards of a million. The informers were both shrewd, sensible men of business; they did not affect to be actuated by a sense of justice, but required a percentage upon so much as government should actually recover through their means.—Nelson examined the books and papers which they produced, and was convinced that government had been most infamously plundered.—Vouchers, he found, in that country, were no check whatever: the principle was, that "a thing was always worth what it would bring;" and the merchants were in the habit of signing vouchers for each other, without even the appearance of looking at the articles. These accounts he sent home to the different departments which had been defrauded: but the peculators were too powerful; and they succeeded not merely in impeding inquiry, but even in raising prejudices against Nelson at the board of Admiralty, which it was many years before he could subdue.

Owing, probably, to these prejudices, and the influence of the peculators, he was treated, on his return to England, in a manner which had nearly driven him from the service. During the three years that the *Boreas* had remained upon a station which is usually so fatal, not a single officer or man of her whole complement had died. This almost



unexampled instance of good health, though mostly, no doubt, imputable to a healthy season, must, in some measure, also, be ascribed to the wise conduct of the captain. He never suffered any of the ships to remain more than three or four weeks at a time at any of the islands; and when the hurricane months confined him to English Harbour, he encouraged all kinds of useful amusements: music, dancing, and cudgelling among the men; theatricals among the officers: any thing which could employ their attention, and keep their spirits cheerful. The *Boreas* arrived in England in June. Nelson, who had been many times supposed to be consumptive when in the West Indies, and perhaps was saved from consumption by that climate, was still in a precarious state of health; and the raw wet weather of one of our ungenial summers brought on cold, and sore throat, and fever: yet his vessel was kept at the Nore from the end of June till the end of November, serving as a slop and receiving ship. This unworthy treatment, which more probably proceeded from intention than from neglect, excited in Nelson the strongest indignation. During the whole five months he seldom or never quitted the ship, but carried on the duty with strict and sullen attention. On the morning when orders were received to prepare the *Boreas* for being paid off, he expressed his joy to the senior officer in the *Medway*, saying, "It will release me for ever from an ungrateful service, for it is my firm and unalterable determination never again to set my foot upon a king's ship. Immediately after my arrival in town, I shall wait on the first lord of the Admiralty, and resign my commission." The officer to whom he thus communicated his intentions, behaved in the wisest and most friendly manner; for finding it in vain to dissuade him in his present state of feeling, he secretly interfered with the first lord to save him from a step so injurious to himself, little foreseeing how deeply the welfare of England was that moment at stake. This interference produced a letter from Lord Howe, the day before the ship was paid off, intimating a wish to see Capt. Nelson as soon as he arrived in town: when, being pleased with his conversation, and perfectly convinced, by what was then explained to him, of the propriety of his conduct, he desired that he might present him to the king on the first levee day: and the gracious manner in which he was then received effectually removed his resentment.

Prejudices have been, in like manner excited against his friend, Prince William Henry. "Nothing is wanting, sir," said Nelson in one of his letters, "to make you the darling of the English nation, but truth. Sorry I am to say, much to the contrary, has been dispersed." This was not flattery; for Nelson was no flatterer. The letter in which this passage occurs shows in how wise and noble a manner he dealt with the prince. One of his royal highness's officers had applied for a court-martial upon a point in which he was unquestionably wrong. His royal highness, however, while he supported his own character and authority prevented the trial, which must have been injurious to a brave and deserving man. "Now that you are parted," said Nelson, "pardon me, my prince, when I presume to recommend that he may stand in



your royal favor as if he had never sailed with you, and that at some future day you will serve him. There only wants this to place your conduct in the highest point of view. None of us are without failings; his was rather being too hasty : but that put in competition with his being a good officer, will not, I am bold to say, be taken in the scale against him. More able friends than myself your royal highness may easily find, and of more consequence in the state ; but one more attached and affectionate is not so easily met with. Princes seldom, very seldom, find a disinterested person to communicate their thoughts to : I do not pretend to be that person : but of this be assured, by a man who, I trust, never did a dishonourable act, that I am interested only that your royal highness should be the greatest and best man this country ever produced."

Encouraged by the conduct of Lord Howe, and by his reception at court, Nelson renewed his attack upon the peculators with fresh spirit. He had interviews with Mr. Rose, Mr. Pitt, and Sir Charles Middleton ; to all of whom he satisfactorily proved his charges. In consequence it is said, these very extensive public frauds were at length put in a proper train to be provided against in future : his representations were attended to ; and every step which he recommended was adopted : the investigation was put in a proper course, which ended in the detection and punishment of some of the culprits ; an immense saving was made to government, and thus its attention was directed to similar speculation in other parts of the colonies. But it is said also, that no mark of commendation seems to have been bestowed upon Nelson for his exertions. And it is justly remarked,\* that the spirit of the navy cannot be preserved so effectually by the honour bestowed on officers, when they are worn out in the service, as by an attention to those who, like Nelson, in this part of his life, have only their integrity and zeal to bring them into notice. A junior officer, who had been left with the command at Jamaica, received an additional allowance, for which Nelson had applied in vain. Double pay was allowed to every artificer and seaman employed in the naval yard : Nelson had superintended the whole business of that yard with the most rigid exactness, and he complained that he was neglected. " It was most true," he said, " that the trouble which he took to detect the fraudulent practices then carried on was no more than his duty ; but he little thought that the expenses attending his frequent journeys to St. John's upon that duty (a distance of twelve miles), would have fallen upon his pay as Captain of the *Boreas*." Nevertheless a sense of what he thought unworthy usage did not diminish his zeal. " I," said he, " must still buffet the waves in search of—what ? Alas ! that they call honour, is now thought of no more. My fortune, God knows, has grown worse for the service : so much for serving my country. But the Devil, ever willing to tempt the virtuous, has made me an offer, if any ships should be sent to destroy his majesty of Morocco's ports, to be there ; and I have some reason to

\* Clark and M'Arthur, vol i. p. 107.



think, that should any more come of it, my humble services will be accepted. I have invariably laid down, and followed close, a plan of what ought to be uppermost in the breast of an officer, that it is much better to serve an ungrateful country, than to give up his own fame. Posterity will do him justice. A uniform course of honour and integrity seldom fails of bringing a man to the goal of fame at last."

The design against the barbary pirates, like all other designs against them, was laid aside; and Nelson took his wife to his father's parsonage, meaning only to pay him a visit before they went to France; a project which he had for the sake of acquiring a competent knowledge of the French language. But his father could not bear to lose him thus unnecessarily. Mr. Nelson had long been an invalid, suffering under paralytic and asthmatic affections, which, for several hours after he rose in the morning scarcely permitted him to speak. He had been given over by his physicians, for this complaint, nearly forty years before his death; and was, for many of his last years, obliged to spend all his winters at Bath. The sight of his son, he declared, had given him new life. "But, Horatio," said he, "it would have been better, that I had not been thus cheered, if I am so soon to be bereaved of you again. Let me my good son, see you while I can. My age and infirmities increase, and I shall not last long." To such an appeal there could be no reply. Nelson took up his abode at the parsonage, and amused himself with the sports and occupations of the country. Sometimes he busied himself with farming the glebe; sometimes spent the greater part of the day in the garden, where he would dig as if for the mere pleasure of wearying himself. Sometimes he went a bird's-nesting, like a boy: and in these expeditions Mrs. Nelson always, by his express desire, accompanied him. Coursing was his favourite amusement. Shooting, as he practised it, was far too dangerous for his companions: for he carried his gun upon the full cock, as if he were going to board an enemy; and the moment a bird rose, he let fly, without ever putting the fowling-piece to his shoulder. It is not, therefore, extraordinary, that his having once shot a partridge should be remembered by his family among the remarkable events of his life.

But his time did not pass away thus without some vexatious cares to ruffle it. The affair of the American ships was not yet over, and he was again pestered with threats of prosecution. "I have written them word," said he, "that I will have nothing to do with them, and they must act as they think proper. Government, I suppose, will do what is right, and not leave me in the lurch. We have heard enough, lately of the consequences of the navigation-act to this country. They may take my person; but if sixpence would save me from a prosecution, I would not give it." It was his great ambition at this time to possess a pony; and having resolved to purchase one, he went to a fair for that purpose. During his absence two men abruptly entered the parsonage, and inquired for him: they then asked for Mrs. Nelson; and after they had made her repeatedly declare that she was really and truly the captain's wife, presented her with a writ or notification, on the part



of the American captains, who now laid their damages at £20,000, and they charged her to give it to her husband on his return. Nelson, having bought his pony came home with it in high spirits. He called out his wife to admire the purchase, and listen to all its excellencies : nor was it till his glee had in some measure subsided that the paper could be presented to him. His indignation was excessive ; and, in the apprehensions that he should be exposed to the anxieties of the suit, and the ruinous consequences which might ensue, he exclaimed, “ This affront I do not deserve ! But I’ll be trifled with no longer. I will write immediately to the treasury ; and, if government will not support me, I am resolved to leave the country.” Accordingly he informed the treasury, that if a satisfactory answer were not sent him by return of post, he should take refuge in France. To this he expected he should be driven, and for this he arranged every thing with his characteristic rapidity of decision. It was settled that he should depart immediately, and Mrs. Nelson follow under the care of his elder brother, Maurice, ten days after him. But the answer which he received from Government quieted his fears ; it stated, that Captain Nelson was a very good officer, and needed to be under no apprehension, for he would assuredly be supported.

Here his disquietudes upon this subject seems to have ended. Still he was not at ease ; he wanted employment, and was mortified that his applications for it produced no effect. “ Not being a man of fortune,” he said, “ was a crime which he was unable to get over, and therefore none of the great cared about him.” Repeatedly he requested the Admiralty that they would not leave him to rust in indolence. During the armament which was made upon occasion of the dispute concerning Nootka Sound, he renewed his application : and his steady friend, Prince William, who had then been created Duke of Clarence, recommended him to Lord Chatham. The failure of this recommendation wounded him so keenly, that he again thought of retiring from the service in disgust : a resolution from which nothing but the urgent remonstrances of Lord Hood induced him to desist. Hearing that the *Raisonnable*, in which he had commenced his career, was about to be commissioned, he asked for her. This also was in vain : and a coolness ensued, on his part, towards Lord Hood, because that excellent officer did not use his influence with Lord Chatham upon this occasion. Lord Hood, however, had certainly sufficient reasons for not interfering ; for he ever continued his steady friend. In the winter of 1792, when we were on the eve of the revolution war, Nelson once more offered his services, earnestly requesting a ship, and added, that if their lordships should be pleased to appoint him to a cockle-boat, he should feel satisfied. He was answered in the usual official form : “ Sir, I have received your letter of the 5th instant, expressing your readiness to serve, and have expressed the same to my Lords commissioners of the admiralty.” On the 22d of December, he received this dry acknowledgment. The fresh mortification, did not, however, affect him long ; for,



by the joint interest of the Duke and Lord Hood, he was appointed on the 30th of January following, to the *Agamemnon*, of sixty-four guns.

### CHAPTER III.

*The Agamemnon sent to the Mediterranean—Commencement of Nelson's Acquaintance with Sir W. Hamilton—He is sent to Corsica, to co-operate with Paoli—State of affairs in that Island—Nelson undertakes the siege of Bastia, and reduces it—Takes a distinguished Part in the Siege of Calvi, where he loses an Eye—Admiral Hotham's Action—The Agamemnon ordered to Genoa, to co-operate with the Austrian and Sardinian Forces—Gross Misconduct of the Austrian General.*

"There are three things, young gentleman," said Nelson to one of his midshipmen, "which you are constantly to bear in mind. 1st. you must always implicitly obey orders, without attempting to form any opinion of your own respecting their propriety. 2dly. you must consider every man your enemy who speaks ill of your king: and, thirdly, you must hate a Frenchman as you do the Devil." Josiah, his son-in-law, went with him as a midshipman.

The *Agamemnon* was ordered to the Mediterranean, under Lord Hood. The fleet arrived in those seas at a time when the south of France would willingly have formed itself into a separate republic, under the protection of England. But good principles had been at that time perilously abused by ignorant and profligate men; and, in its fear and hatred of democracy, the English government abhorred whatever was republican. Lord Hood could not take advantage of the fair occasion which presented itself; and which, if it had been seized with vigour, might have ended in dividing France:—but he negotiated with the people of Toulon, to take possession, provisionally, of their port and city; which, fatally for themselves, was done. Before the British fleet entered, Nelson was sent with despatches to Sir William Hamilton, our envoy at the court of Naples. Sir William, after his first interview with him, told Lady Hamilton he was about to introduce a little man to her, who could not boast of being very handsome; but such a man, as he believed, would one day astonish the world. "I have never before," he continued, "entertained an officer at my house; but I am determined to bring him here. Let him be put in the room prepared for Prince Augustus." Thus that acquaintance began which ended in the destruction of Nelson's domestic happiness. It seemed to threaten no such consequences at its commencement. He spoke of Lady Hamilton, in a letter to his wife, as a young woman of amiable manners, who did honour to the station to which she had been raised: and he remarked, that she had been exceedingly kind to Josiah. The activity with which the envoy exerted himself in procuring troops from Naples, to assist in garrisoning Toulon, so delighted him, that he is said to have exclaimed: "Sir William, you are a man after my own heart!—you do business in my own way;" and then to have added,



"I am now only a captain ; but I will, if I live, be at the top of the tree." Here, also, that acquaintance with the Neapolitan court commenced, which led to the only blot upon Nelson's public character.—The king, who was sincere at that time in his enmity to the French, called the English the Saviours of Italy, and of his dominions in particular. He paid the most flattering attentions to Nelson, made him dine with him, and seated him at his right hand.

Having accomplished this mission, Nelson received orders to join Commodore Linzee, at Tunis. On the way, five sail of the enemy were discovered off the coast of Sardinia, and he chased them. They proved to be three 44 gun frigates, with a corvette of 24 and a brig of 12. The *Agamemnon* had only 345 men at quarters, having landed part of her crew at Toulon; and others being absent in prizes. He came near enough to one of the frigates to engage her, but at great disadvantage, the Frenchman manœuvring well, and sailing greatly better. A running fight of three hours ensued; during which the other ships, which were at some distance, made all speed to come up. By this time the enemy was almost silenced, when a favourable change of wind enabled her to get out of reach of the *Agamemnon's* guns; and that ship had received so much damage in the rigging, that she could not follow her. Nelson conceiving that this was but the forerunner of a far more serious engagement, called his officers together, and asked them if the ship was fit to go into action against such a superior force, without some small refit and refreshment for the men? Their answer was, that she certainly was not. He then gave these orders: "Veer the ship, and lay her head to the westward: let some of the best men be employed in refitting the rigging, and the carpenter getting crows and capstan-bars to prevent our wounded spars from coming down: and get the wine up for the people, with some bread, for it may be half an hour good before we are again in action." But when the French came up, their comrade made signals of distress, and they all hoisted out their boats to go to her assistance, leaving the *Agamemnon* unmolested.

Nelson found Commodore Linzee at Tunis, where he had been sent to expostulate with the dey upon the impolicy of his supporting the revolution of France. Nelson represented to him the atrocity of that government. Such arguments were of little avail in Barbary: and when the dey was told that the French had put their sovereign to death, he dryly replied, that "Nothing could be more heinous; and yet, if historians told the truth, the English had once done the same." This answer had doubtless been suggested by the French about him: they had completely gained the ascendancy, and all negotiation on our part proved fruitless. Shortly afterward Nelson was detached with a small squadron, to co-operate with General Paoli and Anti-Gallican party in Corsica.

Some thirty years before this time, the heroic patriotism of the Corsicans, and of their leader, Paoli, had been the admiration of England. The history of these brave people is but a melancholy tale. The island which they inhabit has been abundantly blessed by nature: it has many excellent harbours; and though the *malaria*, or pestilential atmosphere, which is so deadly in many parts of Italy, and of the Italian islands, prevails on the eastern coast, the greater part of the country is mountainous and healthy. It is about one hundred and fifty miles long, and from forty to fifty broad; in circumference, some three hun-



thred and twenty:—a country large enough, and sufficiently distant from the nearest shores, to have subsisted as an independent state, if the welfare and happiness of the human race had ever been considered as the end and aim of policy. The Moors, the Pisans, the kings of Arragon, and the Genoese, successively attempted, and each for a time effected, its conquest. The yoke of the Genoese continued longest, and was the heaviest. These petty-tyrants ruled with an iron rod: and when at any time a patriot rose to resist their oppressions, if they failed to subdue him by force, they resorted to assassination.—At the commencement of the last century they quelled one revolt by the aid of German auxiliaries, whom the Emperor Charles VI. sent against a people who had never offended him, and who were fighting for whatever is most dear to man. In 1734 the war was renewed; and Theodore, a Whestphalian baron, then appeared upon the stage. In that age men were not accustomed to see adventurers play for kingdoms, and Theodore became the common talk of Europe. He had served in the French armies; and having afterward been noticed both by Ripperda and Alberoni, their example, perhaps, inflamed a spirit as ambitious and as unprincipled as their own. He employed the whole of his means in raising money and procuring arms: then wrote to the leaders of the Corsican patriots, to offer them considerable assistance, if they would erect Corsica into an independent kingdom, and elect him king. When he landed among them, they were struck with his stately person, his dignified manners, and imposing talents: they believed the magnificent promises of foreign assistance which he held out, and elected him accordingly. Had his means been as he represented them, they could not have acted more wisely, than in thus at once fixing the government of their country, and putting an end to those rivalries among the leading families, which had so often proved pernicious to the public weal. He struck money, conferred titles, blocked up the fortified towns which were held by the Genoese, and amused the people with promises of assistance for about eight months: then, perceiving that they cooled in their affections towards him, in proportion as their expectations, he left the island under the plea of expediting himself the succours which he had so long awaited. Such was his address, that he prevailed upon several rich merchants in Holland, particularly the Jews, to trust him with cannon and warlike stores to a great amount. They shipped these under the charge of a supercargo. Theodore returned with this supercargo to Corsica, and put him to death on his arrival, as the shortest way of settling the account. The remainder of his life was a series of deserved afflictions. He threw in the stores which he had thus fraudulently obtained: but he did not dare to land; for Genoa had called in the French to their assistance, and a price had been set upon his head. His dreams of royalty were now at an end: he took refuge in London, contracted debts, and was thrown into the King's Bench. After lingering there many years, he was released under an act of insolvency: in consequence of which, he made over the kingdom of Corsica for the use of his creditors, and died shortly after his deliverance.



The French who have never acted a generous part in the history of the world, readily entered into the views of the Genoese, which accorded with their own policy : for such was their ascendancy at Genoa, that in subduing Corsica for these allies, they were in fact subduing it for themselves. They entered into the contest, therefore, with their usual vigour, and their usual cruelty. It was in vain that the Corsicans addressed a most affecting memorial to the court of Versailles ; that remorseless government persisted in its flagitious project. They poured in troops ; dressed a part of them like the people of the country, by which means they deceived and destroyed many of the patriots ; cut down the standing corn, the vines and the olives ; set fire to the villages, and hung all the most able and active men who fell into their hands. A war of this kind may be carried on with success against a country so small and so thinly peopled as Corsica. Having reduced the island to perfect servitude, which they called peace, the French withdrew their forces. As soon as they were gone, men, women, and boys rose at once against their oppressors. The circumstances of the times were now favourable to them ; and some British ships, acting as allies of Sardinia, bombarded Bastia and San Fiorenzo, and delivered them into the hands of the patriots. This service was long remembered with gratitude : the impression made upon our countrymen was less favourable. They had witnessed the heart-burning of rival chiefs, and the dissensions among the patriots ; and perceiving the state of barbarism to which continual oppression, and habits of lawless turbulence, had reduced the nation, did not recollect that the vices of the people were owing to their unhappy circumstances ; but that the virtues which they displayed arose from their own natures. This feeling, perhaps, influenced the British court, when, in 1746, Corsica offered to put herself under the protection of Great Britain : an answer was returned, expressing satisfaction at such a communication, hoping that the Corsicans would preserve the same sentiments, but signifying also that the present was not the time for such a measure.

These brave islanders then formed a government for themselves, under two leaders, Gaffori and Matra, who had the title of protectors. The latter is represented as a partisan of Genoa, favouring the views of the oppressors of his country by the most treasonable means. Gaffori was a hero worthy of old times. His eloquence was long remembered with admiration. A band of assassins was once advancing against him ; he heard of their approach, went out to meet them ; and, with a serene dignity, which overawed them, requested them to hear him ; he then spoke to them so forcibly of the distresses of their country, her intolerable wrongs, and the hopes and views of their brethren in arms, that the very men who had been hired to murder him, fell at his feet, implored his forgiveness, and joined his banner. While he was besieging the Genoese at Corte, a part of the garrison perceiving the nurse with his eldest son, then an infant in arms, straying at a little distance from the camp, suddenly sallied out and seized them. The use they made of their persons was according to their usual execrable conduct. When



Gaffori advanced to batter the walls, they held up the child directly over the part of the wall at which the guns were pointed. The Corsicans stopped: but Gaffori stood at their head, and ordered them to continue the fire. Providentially the child escaped, and lived to relate, with becoming feeling, a fact so honourable to his father. That father conducted the affairs of the island till 1753, when he was assassinated by some wretches, set on, it is believed, by Genoa; but certainly peisoned by that abominable government after the deed. He left the country in such a state, that it was enabled to continue the war two years after his death without a leader: then they found one worthy of their cause in Pasquale de Paoli.

Paoli's father was one of the patriots who effected their escape from Corsica when the French reduced it to obedience. He retired to Naples, and brought up his youngest son in the Neapolitan service. The Corsicans heard of young Paoli's abilities, and solicited him to come over to his native country, and take the command. He did not hesitate long: his father, who was too far advanced in years to take an active part himself, encouraged him to go; and when they separated, the old man fell on his neck, and kissed him, and gave him his blessing, "My son," said he, "perhaps I may never see you more; but in my mind I shall ever be present with you. Your design is great and noble; and I doubt not but God will bless you in it. I shall devote to your cause the little remainder of my life to offering up my prayers for your success." When Paoli assumed the command, he found all things in confusion: he formed a democratic government, of which he was chosen chief; restored the authority of the laws; established a university; and took such measures, both for redressing abuses and moulding the rising generation, that, if France had not interfered, upon its wicked and detestable principle of usurpation, Corsica might, at this day, have been as free and flourishing, and happy a commonwealth as any of the Grecian states in the days of their prosperity. The Genoese were at this time driven out of their fortified towns, and must in a short time have been expelled. France was indebted some millions of livres to Genoa: it was not convenient to pay this money; so the French minister proposed to the Genoese, that she should discharge the debt by sending six battalions to serve in Corsica four years. The indignation which this conduct excited in all generous hearts was forcibly expressed by Rousseau, who, with all his errors, was seldom deficient in feeling for the wrongs of humanity. "You Frenchmen," said he, writing to one of that people, "are a thoroughly servile nation, thoroughly sold to tyranny, thoroughly cruel and relentless in persecuting the unhappy. If they knew of a freeman at the other end of the world, I believe they would go there for the mere pleasure of extirpating him."

The immediate object of the French happened to be purely mercenary: they wanted to clear off their debt to Genoa; and as the presence of their troops in the islands affected this, they aimed at doing the people no farther mischief. Would that the conduct of England had been at this time free from reproach! but a proclamation was issued by the



English government, after the peace of Paris, prohibiting any intercourse with the rebels of Corsica. Paoli said, he did not expect this from Great Britain. This great man was deservedly proud of his country: "I defy Rome, Sparta, or Thebes," he would say, "to show me thirty years of such patriotism as Corsica can boast!" Availing himself of the respite which the inactivity of the French, and the weakness of the Genoese, allowed, he prosecuted his plans of civilizing the people. He used to say, that though he had an unspeakable pride in the prospect of the fame to which he aspired; yet, if he could but render his countrymen happy, he could be content to be forgotten. His own importance he never affected to undervalue. "We are now to our country," said he, "like the prophet Elisha, stretched over the dead child of the Shunamite—eye to eye, nose to nose, mouth to mouth: it begins to recover warmth, and to revive; I hope it will yet regain full health and vigour."

But when the four years were expired, France purchased the sovereignty of Corsica from the Genoese for forty millions of livres; as if the Genoese had been entitled to sell it; as if any bargain and sale could justify one country in taking possession of another against the will of the inhabitants, and butchering all who oppose the usurpation! Among the enormities which France has committed, this action seems but a speck; yet the foulest murderer that ever suffered by the hand of the executioner, has infinitely less guilt upon his soul than the statesman who concluded this treaty, and the monarch who sanctioned and confirmed it. A desperate and glorious resistance was made; but it was in vain; no power interfered in behalf of these injured islanders, and the French poured in as many troops as were required. They offered to confirm Paoli in the supreme authority, only on condition that he would hold it under their government. His answer was, that "the rocks which surrounded him should melt away before he would betray a cause which he held in common with the poorest Corsican." This people then set a price upon his head. During two campaigns he kept them at bay: they overpowered him at length: he was driven to the shore, and, having escaped on ship-board, took refuge in England. It is said that Lord Shelburne resigned his seat in the cabinet, because the ministry looked on, without attempting to prevent France from succeeding in this abominable and important act of aggrandizement. In one respect, however, our country acted as became her. Paoli was welcomed with the honours which he deserved, a pension of 1200*l.* was immediately granted him; and provision was liberally made for his elder brother and his nephew.

Above twenty years Paoli remained in England, enjoying the friendship of the wise, and the admiration of the good. But when the French revolution began, it seemed as if the restoration of Corsica was at hand. The whole country, as if animated by one spirit, rose and demanded liberty; and the national assembly passed a decree, recognizing the island as a department of France, and therefore entitled to all the privileges of the new French constitution. This satisfied the Corsicans,



which it ought not to have done; and Paoli, in whom the ardour of youth was passed, seeing that his countrymen were contented, and believing that they were about to enjoy a state of freedom, naturally wish'd to return to his native country. He resigned his pension in the year 1790, and appeared at the bar of the assembly with the Corsican deputies, when they took the oath of fidelity to France. But the course of events in France soon dispelled those hopes of a new and better order of things, which Paoli, in common with so many of the friends of human kind, had indulged; and perceiving, after the execution of the king, that a civil war was about to ensue, of which no man could foresee the issue, he prepared to break the connexion between Corsica and the French republic. The convention, suspecting such a design, and perhaps occasioning it by their suspicions, ordered him to their bar. That way, he well knew, led to the guillotine; and returning a respectful answer, he declared that he would never be wanting in his duty, but pleaded age and infirmity as a reason for disobeying the summons. Their second order was more summary: and the French troops, who were in Corsica, aided by those of the natives, who were either influenced by hereditary party feelings, or who were sincere in jacobinism, took the field against him. But the people were with him. He repaired to Corte, the capital of the island, and was again invested with the authority which he had held in the noonday of his fame. The convention upon this denounced him as a rebel, and set a price upon his head. It was not the first time that France had disgracefully proscribed the patriotic Paoli.

Paoli now opened a correspondence with Lord Hood, promising, if the English would make an attack upon St. Fiorenzo from the sea, he would, at the same time, attack it by land. This promise he was unable to perform: and Commodore Linzee, who, in reliance upon it, was sent upon this service, was repulsed with some loss. Lord Hood, who had now been compelled to evacuate Toulon, suspected Paoli of intentionally deceiving him. This was an injurious suspicion.—Shortly afterward he despatched Lieut. Col. (afterward Sir John) Moore and Major Koehler to confer with him upon a plan of operations. It was agreed, that in consideration of the succours, which his Britannic majesty should afford for the expulsion of the French, the island of Corsica should be delivered into the possession of his majesty and bind itself to acquiesce in any settlement he might approve of concerning its government in its future relation with Great Britain. While this negotiation was going on, Nelson cruised off the island with a small squadron, to prevent the enemy from throwing in supplies. Close to St. Fiorenzo the French had a storehouse of flour, near their only mill: he watched an opportunity, and landed 120 men, who threw the flour into the sea, burnt the mill, and re-embarked, before 1000 men, who were sent against him, could occasion them the loss of a single man. While he exerted himself thus, keeping out all supplies, intercepting despatches, attacking their outposts and forts, and cutting out vessels from the bay, a species of warfare which depresses the spirit of an enemy even more than it injures them, because of the sense of individual superiority which it indicates in the assailants.



—troops were landed, and St. Fiorenzo was besieged. The French, finding themselves unable to maintain that post, sunk one of their frigates, burnt another, and retreated to Bastia. Lord Hood submitted to Gen. Dundas, who commanded the land-forces, a plan for the reduction of this place : the general declined co-operating, thinking the attempt impracticable, without a reinforcement of 2000 men, which he expected from Gibraltar. Upon this Lord Hood determined to reduce it with the naval force under his command ; and leaving part of his fleet off Toulon, he came with the rest to Bastia.

He showed a proper respect for Nelson's services, and of confidence in his talents, by taking care not to bring with him any older captain. A few days before their arrival, Nelson had had what he called a brush with the enemy. During this partial action our army appeared upon the heights ; and having reconnoitred the place, returned to St. Fiorenzo. "What the general could have seen to make a retreat necessary," said Nelson, "I cannot comprehend. A thousand men would take Bastia ; with 500 and Agamemnon I would undertake it." Gen. Dundas had not the same confidence. "After many considerations," he said to Lord Hood, "and a personal inspection for several weeks of all circumstances, I consider the siege of Bastia to be a most visionary and rash attempt ; and such as no officer would be justified in undertaking." Lord Hood replied, that nothing would be more gratifying than to assume all the responsibility himself ; and that he was ready to undertake the reduction of the place at his own risk, with the means at present there. Gen. d'Aubant, who succeeded to the command of the army, coincided in opinion with his predecessor, and did not think it right to furnish his Lordship with a single soldier, or cannon. Lord Hood could only obtain a few artillery-men ; and ordering on board that part of the troops who, having been embarked as marines, were borne on the ships' books as part of their respective complements, he began the siege with 1183 soldiers, artillery-men, marines, and 250 sailors.

These men were landed on the 4th of April, under Lieutenant-Colonel Villettes and Nelson, who had now acquired from the army the title of brigadier. Guns were dragged by the sailors up heights where it appeared almost impossible to convey them ;—a work of the greatest difficulty ; and which, Nelson said, could never, in his opinion, have been accomplished by any but British seamen. The soldiers, though less dexterous in such service, because not accustomed, like sailors, to habitual dexterity, behaved with equal spirit. "Their zeal," said the brigadier, "is almost unexampled. There is not a man but considers himself as personally interested in the event, and deserted by the general. It has, I am persuaded, made them equal to double their numbers." This is one proof, of many, that for our soldiers to equal our seamen, it is only necessary for them to be equally well commanded. They have the same heart and soul, as well as the same flesh and blood. Too much may, indeed, be exacted from them in a retreat ; but set their face towards a foe, and there is nothing within the reach of human achievement which they cannot perform. The French had improved the leisure which our military commander had allowed them ; and before Lord Hood commenced his operations, he had the mortification of seeing that the enemy were ever erecting new works, strengthening old ones, and rendering the attempt more difficult. La Combe St. Michel, the commissioner from the national



convention, who was in the city, replied in these terms to the summons of the British admiral: "I have hot shot for your ships, and bayonets for your troops. When two-thirds of our men are killed, I will then trust to the generosity of the English." The siege, however, was not sustained with the firmness which such a reply seemed to augur. On the 19th of May, a treaty of capitulation was begun: that same evening the troops from St. Fiorenzo made their appearance on the hills; and, on the following morning, General D'Aubant arrived with the whole army to take possession of Bastia.

The event of the siege had justified the confidence of the sailors; but they themselves excused the opinion of the generals, when they saw what they had done. "I am all astonishment," said Nelson, "when I reflect on what we have achieved; one thousand regulars, fifteen hundred national guards, and a large party of Corsican troops, four thousand in all, laying down their arms to twelve hundred soldiers, marines and seamen! I always was of opinion, have ever acted up to it, and never had any reason to repent it, that one Englishman was equal to three Frenchmen. Had this been an English town, I am sure it would not have been taken by them. When it had been resolved to attack the place, the enemy were supposed to be far inferior in number; and it was not till the whole had been arranged, and the siege publicly undertaken, that Nelson received certain information of the great superiority of the garrison. This intelligence he kept secret, fearing lest, if so fair a pretext were afforded, the attempt would be abandoned. "My own honour," said he to his wife, "Lord Hood's honour, and the honour of our country, must have been sacrificed, had I mentioned what I knew: therefore, you will believe what must have been my feelings during the whole siege, when I had often proposals made to me to write to Lord Hood to raise it." Those very persons who thus advised him were rewarded for the conduct at the siege of Bastia: Nelson, by whom it may truly be affirmed that Bastia was taken, received no reward. Lord Hood's thanks to him, both public and private, were, as he himself said, the handsomest which man could give; but his signal merits were not so mentioned in the despatches as to make them sufficiently known to the nation, nor to obtain for him from government those honours to which they so amply entitled him. This could only have arisen from the haste in which the despatches were written; certainly not from any deliberate purpose, for Lord Hood was uniformly his steady and sincere friend.

The Agamemnon was now despatched to co-operate at the siege of Calvi with General Sir Charles Stuart; an officer, who, unfortunately for his country, never had an adequate field allotted him for the display of those eminent talents, which were, to all who knew him so conspicuous.\* Nelson had less responsibility here than at Bastia; and was acting with a man after his own heart, who was never sparing of himself, and slept every night in the advanced battery. But the service was not less hard than that of the former siege. "We will fag ourselves to death," said he to Lord Hood, "before any blame shall lie at our doors. I trust it will not be forgotten, that twenty-five pieces of heavy ordnance have

\* Lord Melville was fully sensible of these talents, and bore testimony to them in the handsomest manner after Sir Charles's death.



been dragged to the different batteries, mounted, and, all but three, fought by seamen, except one artillery-man to point the guns." The climate proved more destructive than the service ; for this was during the lion sun, as they there call our season of the dog-days. Of two thousand men, above half were sick, and the rest like so many phantoms. Nelson described himself as the reed among the oaks, bowing before the storm when they were laid low by it. " All the prevailing disorders have attacked me," said he, " but I have not strength enough for them to fasten on." The loss from the enemy was not great : but Nelson received a serious injury ; a shot struck the ground near him, and drove the sand and small gravel into one of his eyes. He spoke of it slightly at the time : writing the same day to Lord Hood, he only said, that he got a little hurt that morning, not much ; and the next day, he said, he should be able to attend his duty in the evening. In fact, he suffered it to confine him only one day ; but the sight was lost.

After the fall of Calvi, his services were, by a strange omission, altogether overlooked ; and his name was not even mentioned in the list of wounded. This was no ways imputed to the Admiral, for he sent home to government Nelson's journal of the siege, that they might fully understand the nature of his indefatigable and unequalled exertions. If those exertions were not rewarded in the conspicuous manner which they deserved, the fault was in the administration of the day, not in Lord Hood. Nelson felt himself neglected. " One hundred and ten days," said he, " I have been actually engaged, at sea, and on shore against the enemy ; three actions against ships, two against Bastia in my ship, four boat actions, and two villages taken, and twelve sail of vessels burned. I do not know that any one has done more. I have had the comfort to be always applauded by my commander-in-chief, but never to be rewarded : and, what is mortifying, for services in which I have been wounded, others have been praised, who, at the same time, were in bed, far from the scene of action. They have not done me justice. But, never mind, I'll have a Gazette of my own." How amply was this second sight of glory realized !

The health of his ship's company had now, in his own words, been miserably torn to pieces by as hard service, as a ship's crew ever performed : one hundred and fifty were in their beds, when he left Calvi ; of them he lost fifty ; and believed that the constitutions of the rest were entirely destroyed. He was now sent with despatches to Mr. Drake, at Genoa, and had his first interview with the doge. The French had, at this time, taken possession of Vado Bay, in the Genoese territory ; and Nelson foresaw, that if their thoughts were bent on the invasion of Italy, they would accomplish it the ensuing spring. " The powers," he said, were jealous of each other ; and none but England was hearty in the cause." His wish was for peace, on fair terms, because England, he thought, was draining herself to maintain allies who would not fight for themselves. Lord Hood had now returned to England, and the command devolved on Admiral Hotham. The affairs of the Mediterranean wore at this time a gloomy aspect. The arts as



well as the arms of the enemy were gaining the ascendancy there. Tuscany concluded peace, relying upon the faith of France, which was, in fact, placing itself at her mercy. Corsica was in danger. We had taken that island for ourselves, annexed it formally to the crown of Great Britain, and given it a constitution as free as our own. This was done with the consent of the majority of the inhabitants : and no transaction between two countries was ever more fairly or legitimately conducted : yet our conduct was unwise ;—the island is large enough to form an independent state, and such we should have made it, under our protection, as long as protection might be needed ; the Corsicans would then have felt as a nation ; but, when one party had given up the country to England, the natural consequence was, that the other looked to France. The question proposed to the people was, to which would they belong ? Our language and our religion were against us ; our unaccommodating manners, it is to be feared, still more so. The French were better politicians. In intrigue they have ever been unrivalled : and it now became apparent, that in spite of old wrongs, which ought never to have been forgotten or forgiven, their partisans were daily acquiring strength. It is part of the policy of France, and a wise policy it is to impress upon other powers the opinion of its strength, by lofty language, and by threatening before it strikes ; a system which, while it keeps up the spirit of its allies, and perpetually stimulates their hopes, tends also to dismay its enemies. Corsica was now loudly threatened. The French, who had not yet been taught to feel their own inferiority upon the seas, braved us, in contempt, upon that element. They had a superior fleet in the Mediterranean, and they sent it out with express orders, to seek the English and engage them. Accordingly, the Toulon fleet, consisting of seventeen ships of the line, and five smaller vessels, put to sea. Admiral Hotham received this information at Leghorn, and sailed immediately in search of them. He had with him fourteen sail of the line, and one Neapolitan seventy-four ; but his ships were only half-manned, containing but seven thousand six hundred and fifty men, whereas the enemy had sixteen thousand nine hundred. He soon came in sight of them : a general action was expected ; and Nelson, as was his custom on such occasions, wrote a hasty letter to his wife, as that which possibly might contain his last farewell. “The lives of all,” said he, “are in the hand of Him who knows best, whether to preserve mine or not ; my character and good name are in my own keeping.”

But however confident the French government might be of their naval superiority, the officers had no such feeling ; and after manœuvring for a day, in sight of the English fleet, they suffered themselves to be chased. One of their ships, the *Ca Ira*, of eighty-four guns, carried away her main and foretopmasts. The *Inconstant* frigate fired at the disabled ship, but received so many shot, that she was obliged to leave her. Soon afterward a French frigate took the *Ca Ira* in tow ; and the *Sans-Culottes*, one hundred and twenty, and the *Jean Barras*, seventy-four, kept a gun-shot distance on her weather bow. The *Agamemnon* stood towards her, having no ship of the line to support her within several miles. As she drew near the *Ca Ira* fired her



stern guns so truly, that not a shot missed some part of the ship, and, latterly, the masts were struck by every shot. It had been Nelson's intention not to fire before he touched her stern; but seeing how impossible it was that he should be supported and how certainly the *Agamemnon* must be severely cut up, if her masts were disabled, he altered his plan according to the occasion. As soon, therefore, as he was within a hundred yards of her stern, he ordered the helm to be put a-starboard, and the driver and after-sails to be brailled up and shivered; and, as the ship fell off, gave the enemy her whole broad-side. They instantly braced up the after-yards, put the helm a-port, and stood after her again. This manœuvre he practised for two hours and a quarter, never allowing the *Ca Ira* to get a single gun from either side to bear on him; and when the French fired their after-guns now, it was no longer with coolness and precision, for every shot went far ahead. By this time her sails were hanging in tatters, her mizen-topmast, mizen-topsail, and cross-jack-yards, shot away. But the frigate which had her in tow hove in stays, and got her round.—Both these French ships now brought their guns to bear, and opened their fire. The *Agamemnon* passed them within half pistol-shot; almost every shot passed over her, for the French had elevated their guns for the rigging, and for distant firing, and did not think of altering the elevation. As soon as the *Agamemnon*'s after guns ceased to bear, she hove in stays, keeping a constant fire as she came round; and being worked, said Nelson, with as much exactness as if she had been turning into Spithead. On getting round, he saw that the *Sans-Culottes*, which had wore, with many of the enemy's ships, was under his lee-bow, and standing to leeward. The admiral, at the same time, made the signal for the van-ships to join him. Upon this Nelson bore away, and prepared to set all sail; and the enemy, having saved their ship, hauled close to the wind, and opened upon him a distant and ineffectual fire. Only seven of the *Agamemnon*'s men were hurt—a thing which Nelson himself remarked as wonderful: her sails and rigging were very much cut, and she had many shots in her hull, and some between wind and water. The *Ca Ira* lost one hundred and ten men that day, and was so cut up, that she could not get a topmast aloft during the night.

At daylight, on the following morning, the English ships were taken aback with a fine breeze at N. W. while the enemy's fleet kept the southerly wind. The body of their fleet was about five miles distant; the *Ca Ira*, and the *Censeur*, seventy-four, which had her in tow, about three and a half. All sail was made to cut these ships off; and, as the French attempted to save them, a partial action was brought on. The *Agamemnon* was again engaged with her yesterday's antagonist; but she had to fight on both sides the ship at the same time. The *Ca Ira* and the *Censeur* fought most gallantly; the first lost nearly three hundred men in addition to her former loss; the last, three hundred and fifty. Both at last struck: and Lieutenant Andrews, of the *Agamemnon*, brother to the lady to whom Nelson had been attached in France, and, in Nelson's own words, "as gallant an officer as ever stepped a quarter-deck," hoisted English colours on board them both. The rest of the



enemy's ships behaved very ill. As soon as these vessels had struck, Nelson went to Admiral Hotham, and proposed that the two prizes should be left with the *Illustrious* and *Courageux*, which had been crippled in the action, and with four frigates, and that the rest of the fleet should pursue the enemy, and follow up the advantage to the utmost. But his reply was—"We must be contented: we have done very well."—"Now," said Nelson, "had we taken ten sail, and allowed the eleventh to escape, when it had been possible to have got at her, I could never have called it well done. Goodall backed me: I got him to write to the admiral; but it would not do. We should have had such a day as, I believe the annals of England never produced." In this letter the character of Nelson fully manifests itself. "I wish," said he, to be an admiral, and in the command of the English fleet; I should very soon either do much, or be ruined: my disposition cannot bear tame and slow measures. Sure I am, had I command'd on the 14th, that either the whole French fleet would have graced my triumph, or I should have been in a confounded scrape." What the event would have been, he knew from his prophetic feelings and his own consciousness of power: and we also know it now, for *Aboukir* and *Trafalgar* have told it us.

The *Ca Ira* and *Censeur* probably defended themselves with more obstinacy in this action, from a persuasion, that, if they struck, no quarter would be given; because they had fired red-hot shot, and had also a preparation sent, as they said, by the convention from Paris, which seems to have been of the nature of the Greek fire; for it became liquid when it was discharged, and water would not extinguish its flames. This combustible was concealed with great care in the captured ships; like the red-hot shot, it had been found useless in battle. Admiral Hotham's action saved Corsica for the time; but the victory had been incomplete, and the arrival at Toulou of six sail of the line, two frigates, and two cutters from Brest, gave the French a superiority, which, had they known how to use it, would materially have endangered the British Mediterranean fleet. That fleet had been greatly neglected during Lord Chatham's administration at the Admiralty; and it did not, for some time, feel the beneficial effect of his removal. Lord Hood had gone home to represent the real state of affairs, and solicit reinforcements adequate to the exigencies of the times, and the importance of the scene of action. But that fatal error of under-proportioning the force to the service; that ruinous economy which, by sparing a little, renders all that is spent useless, infected the British councils; and Lord Hood, not being able to obtain such reinforcements as he knew were necessary, resigned the command. "Surely," said Nelson, the people at home have forgotten us. Another Neapolitan 74 joined Admiral Hotham, and Nelson observed with sorrow, that this was matter of exultation to an English fleet. When the storeships and victuallers arrived, their escape from the enemy was thought wonderful; and yet, had they not escaped, "the game," said Nelson, "was up here! Our operations are at a stand for want of ships." It was reported that the French were again out with 18 or 20 sail. The combined British and Neapolitan were but 16; should the



enemy be only 18, Nelson made no doubt of victory; but if they were 20, he said, it was not to be expected; and a battle, without complete victory, would have been destruction, because another mast was not to be got on that side Gibraltar. At length, Admiral Man arrived with a squadron from England.

About this time Nelson was made colonel of marines:—a mark of approbation which he had long wished for rather than expected. It came in good season, for his spirits were oppressed by the thought that his services had not been acknowledged as they deserved; and it abated the resentful feeling which would else have been excited by the answer to an application to the war-office. During his four months' land service in Corsica, he had lost all his ship furniture, owing to the movements of a camp. Upon this he wrote to the secretary at war, briefly stating what his services on shore had been, and saying, he trusted it was not asking an improper thing to request that the same allowance might be made to him which would be made to a land officer of his rank, which, situated as he was, would be that of a brigadier-general: if this could not be accorded, he hoped that his additional expenses would be paid him. The answer which he received was, that "no pay had ever been issued under the direction of the war-office to officers of the navy, serving with the army on shore."

He now entered upon a new line of service. The Austrian and Sardinian armies, under General de Vins, required a British squadron to co-operate with them in driving the French from the Riviera di Genoa, and as Nelson had been so much in the habit of soldiering, it was immediately fixed that the brigadier should go. He sailed from St. Fiorenzo on this destination; but fell in, off Cape del Mele, with the enemy's fleet, who immediately gave his squadron chase. The chase lasted four-and-twenty hours; and owing to the fickleness of the wind, the British ships were sometimes hard pressed; but the want of skill on the part of the French, gave them many advantages. Nelson bent his way back to St. Fiorenzo, where the fleet, which was in the midst of watering and refitting, had, for seven hours, the mortification of seeing him almost in possession of the enemy, before the wind would allow them to put out to his assistance. The French, however, at evening went off, not choosing to approach nearer the shore. During the night, Admiral Hotham, by great exertions, got under way; and having sought the enemy four days, came in sight of them on the fifth. Baffling winds, and vexatious calms, so common in the Mediterranean, rendered it impossible to close with them; only a partial action could be brought on; and then the firing made a perfect calm. The French being to windward, drew in shore; and the English fleet was becalmed six or seven miles to the westward. L'Alcide, of seventy-four guns, struck; but before she could be taken possession of, a box of combustibles in her foretop took fire, and the unhappy crew experienced how far more perilous their inventions were to themselves than to their enemies. So rapid was the conflagration, that the French, in their official account say, the hull, the masts and sails, all seemed to take fire at the same moment; and though the English boats were put out to the assistance



of the poor wretches on board, not more than two hundred could be saved. The *Agamemnon*, and Captain Rowley, in the *Cumberland*, were just getting into close action, a second time, when the admiral called them off, the wind now being directly into the gulf of Frejus, where the enemy anchored after the evening closed.

Nelson now proceeded to his station, with eight sail of frigates under his command. Arriving at Genoa, he had a conference with Mr. Drake, the British envoy to that state; the result of which was, that the object of the British must be, to put an entire stop to all trade between Genoa, France, and the places occupied by the French troops: for, unless this trade were stopped, it would be scarcely possible for the allied armies to hold their situation, and impossible for them to make any progress in driving the enemy out of the Riviera di Genoa. Mr. Drake was of opinion, that even Nice might fall for want of supplies, if the trade with Genoa were cut off. This sort of blockade Nelson could not carry on without great risk to himself. A captain in the navy, as he represented to the envoy is liable to prosecution for detention and damages. This danger was increased by an order which had then lately been issued; by which, when a neutral ship was detained, a complete specification of her cargo was directed to be sent to the secretary of the Admiralty, and no legal process instituted against her till the pleasure of that board should be communicated. This was requiring an impossibility. The cargoes of ships detained upon this station, consisting chiefly of corn, would be spoiled long before the orders of the Admiralty could be known; and then, if they should happen to release the vessel, the owners would look to the Captain for damages. Even the only precaution which could be taken against this danger, involved another danger not less to be apprehended: for, if the captain should direct the cargo to be taken out, the freight paid for, and the vessel released, the agent employed might prove fraudulent, and become a bankrupt; and in that case the captain became responsible. Such things had happened: Nelson therefore required, as the only means for carrying on that service, which was judged essential to the common cause, without exposing the officers to ruin, that the British envoy should appoint agents to pay the freight, release the vessels, sell the cargo, and hold the amount till process was had upon it: government thus securing its officers. "I am acting," said Nelson, "not only without the orders of my commander-in-chief, but in some measure contrary to him. However, I have not only the support of his majesty's ministers, both at Turin and Genoa, but a conscientiousness that I am doing what is right and proper for the service of our king and country. Political courage, in an officer abroad, is as highly necessary as military courage."

This quality, as much rarer than military courage, as it is more valuable, without which the soldier's bravery is very often of little avail, Nelson possessed in an eminent degree. His representations were attended to as they deserved. Admiral Hotham commended him for what he had done; and the attention of government was awakened to



the injury which the cause of the allies continually suffered from the frauds of neutral vessels. "What changes in my life of activity!" said this indefatigable man. "Here I am; having commenced a co-operation with an old Austrian general, almost fancying myself charging at the head of a troop of horse! I do not write less than from ten to twenty letters every day; which, with the Austrian general and aids-de-camp, and my own little squadron, fully employ my time. This I like;—active service, or none." It was Nelson's mind which supported his feeble body through these exertions. He was at this time almost blind, and wrote with very great pain. "Poor Agamemnon," he sometimes said, "was as nearly worn out as her captain: and both must soon be laid up to repair."

When Nelson first saw General de Vins, he thought him an able man, who was willing to act with vigour. The general charged his inactivity upon the Piedmontese and Neapolitans, whom, he said, nothing could induce to act; and he concerted a plan with Nelson, for embarking a part of the Austrian army, and landing it in the rear of the French. But the English commodore soon began to suspect that the Austrian general was little disposed to any active operations. In the hope of spurring him on, he wrote to him, telling him that he had surveyed the coast to the westward as far as Nice, and would undertake to embark four or five thousand men, with their arms and a few days' provisions, on board the squadron, and land them within two miles of St. Remo, with their field-pieces. Respecting farther provisions for the Austrian army, he would provide convoys, that they should arrive in safety; and, if a re-embarkation should be found necessary, he would cover it with the squadron. The possession of St. Remo, as headquarters for magazines of every kind, would enable the Austrian general to turn his army to the eastward or westward. The enemy at Oneglia would be cut off from provisions, and men could be landed to attack the place whenever it was judged necessary. St. Remo was the only place between Vado and Ville Franche, where the squadron could lie in safety, and anchor in almost all winds. The bay was not as good as Vado for large ships; but it had a mole, which Vado had not, where all small vessels could lie, and load and unload their cargoes. This bay being in possession of the allies, Nice could be completely blockaded by sea. General de Vins, affecting, in his reply, to consider that Nelson's proposal had no other end than that of obtaining the bay of St. Remo as a station for the ships, told him, what he well knew, and had expressed before, that Vado bay was a better anchorage; nevertheless, if *Monsieur le Commandant Nelson* was well assured that part of the fleet could winter there, there was no risk to which he would not expose himself with pleasure, for the sake of obtaining a safe station for the vessels of his Britannic majesty. Nelson soon assured the Austrian commander, that this was not the object of his memorial. He now began to suspect that both the Austrian court and their general had other ends in view than the cause of the allies. "This army," said he, "is slow beyond all description; and I begin to think that the emperor



is anxious to touch another four millions of English money. As for the German generals, war is their trade, and peace is ruin to them; therefore, we cannot expect that they should have any wish to finish the war. The politics of courts are so mean, that private people would be ashamed to act in the same way; all is trick and finesse, to which the common cause is sacrificed. The general wants a loophole; it has for some time appeared to me, that he means to go no farther than his present position, and to lay the miscarriage of the enterprise against Nice, which has always been held out as the great object of his army, to the non-co-operation of the British fleet, and of the Sardinians."

To prevent this plea, Nelson again addressed de Vins, requesting only to know the time, and the number of troops ready to embark; then he would, he said, despatch a ship to Admiral Hotham, requesting transports, having no doubt of obtaining them, and trusting that the plan would be successful to its full extent. Nelson thought at the time, that if the whole fleet were offered him for transports, he would find some other excuse; and Mr. Drake, who was now appointed to reside at the Austrian head-quarters, entertained the same idea of the general's sincerity. It was not, however, put so clearly to the proof as it ought to have been. He replied, that as soon as Nelson could declare himself ready with the vessels necessary for conveying ten thousand men, with their artillery and baggage, he would put the army in motion. But Nelson was not enabled to do this; Admiral Hotham, who was highly meritorious in leaving such a man so much at his own disposal, pursued a cautious system, ill according with the bold and comprehensive views of Nelson, who continually regretted Lord Hood, saying, that the nation had suffered much by his resignation of the Mediterranean command. The plan which had been concerted, he said, would astonish the French, and perhaps the English.

There was no unity in the views of the allied powers, no cordiality in their co-operation, no energy in their councils. The neutral powers assisted France more effectually than the allies assisted each other. The Genoese ports were at this time filled with French privateers, which swarmed out every night, and covered the gulf; and French vessels were allowed to tow out of the port of Genoa itself, board vessels which were coming in, and then return into the mole. This was allowed without a remonstrance; while though Nelson abstained most carefully from offering any offence to the Genoese territory or flag, complaints were so repeatedly made against his squadron, that, he says, it seemed a trial who should be tired first; they of complaining, or he of answering their complaints. But the question of neutrality was soon at an end. An Austrian commissary was travelling from Genoa towards Vado; it was known that he was to sleep at Voltri, and that he had £10,000 with him; a booty which the French minister in that city, and the captain of a French frigate in that port considered as far more important than the word of honour of the one, the duties of the other, and the laws of neutrality. The boats of the frigate went out with some privateers, landed, robbed the commissary, and brought back the money to Genoa. The next day men were publicly enlisted in that city for the French army; seven hundred men



were embarked, with seven thousand stand of arms, on board the frigates, and other were to land between Voltri and Savona :—there a detachment from the French army was to join them, and the Genoese peasantry were to be invited to insurrection,—a measure for which every thing had been prepared. The night of the 13th was fixed for the sailing of this expedition : the Austrians called loudly for Nelson to prevent it ; and he, on the evening of the 13th, arrived at Genoa. His presence checked the plan : the frigate, knowing her deserts, got within the merchant ships, in the inner mode ; and the Genoese government did not now even demand of Nelson respect to the neutral port, knowing that they had allowed, if not connived at, a flagrant breach of neutrality, and expecting the answer which he was prepared to return, that it was useless and impossible for him to respect it longer.

But though this movement produced immediate effect which was designed, it led to ill consequences, which Nelson foresaw, but, for want of sufficient force, was unable to prevent. His squadron was too small for the service which it had to perform. He required two seventy-fours, and eight or ten frigates and sloops ; but when he demanded this reinforcement, Admiral Hotham had left the command ; Sir Hyde Parker succeeded till the new commander should arrive ; and he immediately reduced it almost to nothing, leaving him only one frigate and a brig. This was a fatal error. While the Austrian and Sardinian troops whether from the imbecility or the treachery of their leaders, remained inactive, the French were preparing for the invasion of Italy. Not many days before Nelson was thus summoned to Genoa, he chased a large convoy into Allassio. Twelve vessels he had formerly destroyed in that port, though two thousand French troops occupied the town : the former attack had made them take new measures of defence ; and there were now above one hundred sail of victuallers, gun-boats, and ships of war. Nelson represented to the admiral how important it was to destroy these vessels ; and offered, with his squadron of frigates, and the Culloden and Courageaux, to lead himself in the *Agamemnon*, and take or destroy the whole. The attempt was not permitted : but it was Nelson's belief, that, if it had been made, it would have prevented the attack upon the Austrian army which took place almost immediately afterward.

Gen. de Vins demanded satisfaction of the Genoese government for the seizure of his commissary ; and without waiting for their reply, took possession of some empty magazines of the French, and pushed his sentinels to the very gates of Genoa. Had he done so at first, he would have found the magazines full ; but useless as it was to the cause of the allies, it was in character with the Austrian general's conduct : and it is no small proof of the dexterity with which he served the enemy, that in such circumstances he could so act with Genoa, as to contrive to put himself in the wrong. Nelson was at this time, in his own words, placed in a cleft stick. The Austrian minister and the Austrian general joined in requiring him not to leave Genoa : if he left that port unguarded, the French plan for taking post between Voltri and Savona would certainly succeed. On the other hand, if he were not at Pietra, the enemy's gunboats would harass the left flank of the Austrians, who, if they were defeated, would lay their defeat to the want of assistance from the *Agamemnon*. He had foreseen the danger, and pointed out how it might be prevented ; but the means of



preventing it were withheld. The attack was made, as he foresaw; and gunboats brought to bear upon the Austrians. It so happened that the left flank was the only part which behaved well; this division stood its ground till the centre and right wing fled. Gen. de Vins gave up the command in the middle of the battle, pleading ill health. "From that moment," says Nelson, "not a soldier staid at his post:—it was the devil take the hindmost. Many thousands ran away who had never seen the enemy; some of them 29 miles from the advanced posts. Thus has ended my campaign—We have established the French republic; which would never have been settled by such a volatile, changeable people. I hate a Frenchman: they are equally objects of my detestation, whether royalists or republicans; in some points, I believe, the latter are the best."

The defeat of General de Vins gave the enemy possession of the Genoese coast from Savona to Voltri; and it deprived the Austrians of their direct communication with the English fleet. The *Agamemnon*, therefore, could no longer be useful on this station, and Nelson sailed for Leghorn to refit. When his ship went into dock, there was not a mast, yard, sail, or any part of the rigging, but what stood in need of repair, having been cut to pieces with shot. The hull was so damaged, that it had for some time been secured by cables, which were served or thrapped round it.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

*Sir J. Jervis takes the Command—Genoa joins the French—Buonaparte begins his Career—Evacuation of Corsica—Nelson hoists his broad Pennant in the Minerve—Action with the Sabina—Battle off Cape St. Vincent—Nelson commands the inner Squadron at the Blockade of Cadiz—Boat Action in the Bay of Cadiz—Expedition against Teneriffe—Nelson loses an Arm—His sufferings in England, and Recovery.*

SIR JOHN JERVIS had now arrived to take command of the Mediterranean fleet. *Agamemnon* having, as her captain said, been made as fit for sea as a rotten ship could be, Nelson sailed from Leghorn, and joined the admiral in Fiorenzo Bay. "I found him," said he, "anxious to know many things, which I was a good deal surprised to find had not been communicated to him by others in the fleet; and it would appear that he was so well satisfied with my opinion of what is likely to happen, and the means of prevention to be taken, that he had no reserve with me respecting his information and ideas of what is likely to be done." The manner in which Nelson was received is said to have excited some envy. One captain observed to him: "You did just as you pleased in Lord Hood's time, the same in Admiral Hotham's, and now again with Sir John Jervis: it makes no difference to you who is commander-in-chief." A higher compliment could not have been paid to any commander-in-chief, than to say of him, that he understood the merits of Nelson, and left him, as far as possible, to act upon his own judgment.



Sir John Jervis offered him the *St. George*, ninety, or the zealous, seventy-four, and asked if he should have any objection to serve under him with his flag. He replied, that if the *Agamemnon* were ordered home, and his flag were not arrived, he should, on many accounts, wish to return to England: still, he should be very proud of hoisting his flag under Sir John's command. "We cannot spare you," said Sir John. Accordingly, he resumed his station. The French had not followed up their successes there. Scherer, the commander, owed his advancement to any other cause than his merit; but he was removed from the command, and Buonaparte appointed to succeed him.-- Buonaparte had given indications of his military talents at Toulon, and of his remorseless nature at Paris: but the extent of his ability or his wickedness was at this time known to none, not even to himself, perhaps.

Nelson supposed, from information, that one column of the French army would take possession of Port Especia; either penetrating thro' the Genoese territory, or proceeding coastwise in light vessels; our ships of war not being able to approach the coast, because of the shallowness of the water. The possession of Vado Bay, and the taking of Port Especia, were necessary to prevent this; then Italy would be safe from any attack of the French by sea. Gen. Beaulieu, who had superseded Vins, sent his aid-de-camp to communicate with Nelson, to see if he could anchor in any other place than Vado Bay. Nelson said that Vado was the only place where the British fleet could lie in safety: but all places would suit his squadron. The Austrian asked, if there was not a risk of losing the squadron? and was answered, if lost, the admiral would find others. But the battle of Montenotte, frustrated all co-operation with the Austrians. Beaulieu ordered an attack to be made upon Voltri;--it was made 12 hours before the time fixed. In consequence, the French were enabled to effect their retreat upon Montenotte; thus giving the troops there a decisive superiority over the division which attacked them. This drew on the defeat of the Austrians. Bonaparte pursued his advantages; and, in the course of a fortnight, dictated to the court of Turin terms of peace; by which all the strongest places of Piedmont were put into his hands.

Only on one occasion, Nelson was able to impede the progress of this new conqueror. Six vessels, laden with cannon, &c. sailed from Toulon for St. Pier d'Arena. Assisted by the *Meleager*, he drove them under a battery, and captured the whole. Military books, &c. maps of Italy, with the different points marked upon them where former battles had been fought, for Buonaparte's use, were found in the convoy. This compelled the French to raise the siege of Mantua: but there was too much imbecility in the councils of the allied powers, for Austria to improve this success. Bonaparte conceived that all Italy was within his reach: treaties of neutral powers were as little regarded by him as by the government for which he acted; in open contempt of both he entered Tuscany, and took possession of Leghorn. In consequence, Nelson blockaded that port, and landed a British force in the Isle of Elba, to secure Porto Ferrajo. Soon afterward he took the island of Capraja, which had formerly belonged to Corsica, being less than forty miles distant from it; which enabled the Genoese to retain it, after their infamous sale of Corsica to France. Genoa had now taken part with France: its government willingly wished to exclude the English from their ports. Copraja was seized, in consequence; but



this act of vigour was not followed up. England depended too much upon the feeble governments of the continent, and too little upon itself. It was determined by the British cabinet to evacuate Corsica, as soon as Spain should form an offensive alliance with France. This event had now taken place; and orders for the evacuation were immediately sent out. It was impolitic to annex this island to the British dominions; but having done so, it was disgraceful thus to abandon it. The disgrace would have been spared, if the people of the island had at first been left to form a government for themselves, and protected by us.

The viceroy, Sir Gilbert Elliot, deeply felt the impolicy and ignominy of this evacuation. The fleet also was ordered to leave the Mediterranean. This resolution was so contrary to the last instructions which had been received, that Nelson exclaimed, "do his Majesty's ministers know their own minds? They at home," said he, "do not know what this fleet is capable of performing—any thing and every thing. Much as I shall rejoice to see England, I lament our present orders in sack-cloth and ashes, so dishonourable to the dignity of England whose fleets are equal to meet the world in arms: and of all the fleets I ever saw, I never beheld one, in point of officers and men, equal to Sir John Jervis's, who is a commander-in-chief able to lead them to glory." Sir Gilbert Elliot believed that the Corsicans were perfectly satisfied, as they had good reason to be, with the British government, sensible of its advantages, and attached to it. However this may have been, when they found that the English intended to evacuate the island, they naturally and necessarily sent to make their peace with the French. The partisans of France found none to oppose them. A committee of thirty took upon them the government of Bastia, and sequestered all the British property: armed Corsicans mounted guard at every place, and a plan was laid for seizing the viceroy. Nelson, who was appointed to superintend the evacuation, frustrated these projects. At a time when every one else despaired of saving stores, cannon, provisions, or property of any kind, and a privateer was moored across the mole-head to prevent all boats from passing, he sent word to the committee, that if the slightest opposition were made to the embarkation and removal of British property, he would batter the town down. The privateer pointed her guns at the officer who carried this message, and muskets were levelled against his boats from the mole-head. Upon this, Captain Sutton, of the Egmont, pulling out his watch, gave them a quarter of an hour to deliberate upon their answer. In five minutes after the expiration of that time, the ships, he said, would open their fire. Upon this the very sentinels scampered off, and every vessel came out of the mole. A ship owner complained to the commodore, that the municipality refused to let him take his goods out of the custom-house. Nelson directed him to say, that unless they were instantly delivered he would open his fire. The committee turned pale; and, without answering a word, gave him the keys. Their last attempt was to levy a duty upon the things that were re-embarked. He sent them word, that he would pay them a disagreeable visit, if there were any more complaints. The committee then finding that they had a man to deal with who knew



his own power, and was determined to make the British name respected, desisted from the insolent conduct which they had assumed: and it was acknowledged that Bastia, never had been so quiet and orderly since the English had possessed it. This was October 14th: during the five following days the embarkation went on, the private property was saved, and public stores to the amount of £200,000. The French, favoured by the Spanish fleet, which was at that time within 12 leagues of Bastia, pushed over troops from Leghorn, who landed near Cape Corse on the 18th; and, on the 20th, at one in the morning, entered the citadel, an hour only after the British had spiked the guns and evacuated it. Nelson embarked at daybreak, being the last person who left the shore. Provoked at the conduct of the municipality, he stepped into his boat and exclaimed: "Now, John Corse, follow the natural bent of your detestable character—plunder and revenge." This, though, was not Nelson's deliberate opinion of the people of Corsica; he knew that their vices were the natural consequences of internal anarchy and foreign oppression: and when he saw that of all those who took leave of the viceroy, none parted from him without tears, he acknowledged, that they acted not from dislike of the English, but from fear of the French.

Having thus ably effected this humiliating service, Nelson was ordered to hoist his broad penant on board the *Minerve* frigate, Capt. Geo. Cockburn, and, with the *Blanche* under his command, proceed to Porto Ferrajo, and superintend the evacuation of that place also. On his way, he fell in with two Spanish frigates, the *Sabina* and the *Ceres*. The *Minerve* engaged the former, which was commanded by D. Jacobo Stuart, a descendant of the Duke of Berwick. After an action of three hours, during which the Spaniards lost 164 men, the *Sabina* struck. The Spanish captain, the only surviving officer, had hardly been conveyed on board the *Minerve*, when another enemy's frigate came up, compelled her to cast off the prize, and brought her a second time to action. After half an hour's trial of strength, this new antagonist wore and hauled off: but a Spanish squadron of two ships of the line and two frigates came in sight. The *Blanche*, from which the *Ceres* had got off, was far to windward, and the *Minerve* escaped only by the anxiety of the enemy to recover their own ship. As soon as Nelson reached Porto Ferrajo, he sent his prisoner in a flag of truce to Carthagená, having returned him his sword; this he did in honour of the gallantry which D. Jacobo had displayed, and from respect to his ancestry "I feel it," said he, "consonant to the dignity of my country, and I always act as I feel right, without regard to custom: he was reputed the best officer in Spain, and his men were worthy of such a commander." By the same flag of truce he sent back all the Spanish prisoners to Porto Ferrajo; and received in exchange his own men taken in the prize.

General de Burgh, who commanded at the Isle of Elba, did not think himself authorized to abandon the place, till he had received specific instructions from England to that effect; professing that he was unable to decide between the contradictory orders of government, or to guess



at what their present intentions might be: but he said, his only motive for urging delay in the measure arose from a desire that his own conduct might be properly sanctioned, not from any opinion that Porto Ferrajo ought to be retained. But Naples having made peace, Sir J. Jervis considered his business with Italy as concluded; and the protection of Portugal was the point to which he was now instructed to attend. Nelson, therefore, whose orders were perfectly clear, withdrew the whole naval establishment from the station, leaving the transports victualled, and so arranged, that all the troops and stores could be embarked in three days. He was now about to leave the Mediterranean. Mr. Drake, who had been our minister at Genoa, expressed to him the high opinion the allies entertained of his merit: adding, that it was impossible for any one, who had the honour of co-operating with him, not to admire the activity, talents, and zeal which he had displayed. In fact, the whole of his conduct had exhibited the same zeal and energy, the same intuitive judgment and unerring decision, which characterized his after-career of glory. His name was as yet hardly known to the English public; but it was feared and respected throughout Italy. A letter came to him, directed "Horatio Nelson, Genoa:" and the writer, when asked how he could direct it so vaguely, replied, "Sir, there is but one Horatio Nelson in the world." At Genoa, in particular, where he had so long been stationed, he was equally respected by the doge and the people: for while he maintained the rights of Britain with becoming firmness, he tempered the exercise of power with courtesy and humanity. "Had all my actions," said he, writing at this time to his wife, "been gazetted, not one fortnight would have passed, during the whole war, without a letter from me. One day or other I will have a long gazette to myself. I feel that such an opportunity will be given to me. I cannot, if I am in the field of glory, be kept out of sight: wherever there is any thing to be done, there Providence is sure to direct my steps."

These anticipations were soon to be fulfilled. Nelson's mind had long been irritated by the fear that a general action would take place before he could join the fleet. At length he sailed with a convoy for Gibraltar; and having reached that place, proceeded in search of the admiral. He fell in with the Spanish fleet; and reaching the station off Cape St. Vincent's, communicated this intelligence to Sir John Jervis. He was directed to shift his pennant on board the *Captain*, 74, Capt. Miller; and, before sunset, the signal was made to prepare for action. At daybreak the enemy were in sight. The British force consisted of two ships of 100 guns, two of 98, two of 90, eight of 74, and one 64; fifteen of the line in all; with four frigates, a sloop, and a cutter. The Spaniards had one four-decker, of 136 guns; six three-deckers, of 112: two 84; eighteen 74; in all, 27 ships of the line, with ten frigates and a brig. Their admiral, de Cordova, had learned from an American that the English had only nine ships, which indeed was the case when his informer had seen them; for a reinforcement had not then joined. Upon this information, the Spanish commander determined to seek an enemy so inferior in force: and relying upon the American account, he suffered his ships to remain too far dispersed



and in disorder. When the morning broke, and discovered the English fleet, a fog for some time concealed their number. The fleet had heard their signal guns during the night; soon after daylight they were seen much scattered, while the British ships were in a compact body. The look-out ship of the Spaniards fancying her signal disregarded, because so little notice seemed to be taken of it, made another signal, that the English consisted of 40 sail. The captain did this to rouse the admiral: it had the effect of perplexing him. The absurdity of such an act shows what was the state of the Spanish navy under that miserable government. When it was contemplated that Spain would take part in the war, as an ally of France, Nelson said that their fleet, if it were no better than with us, would "soon be done for."

Before the enemy could form battle, Sir J. Jervis came up with them, passed thro' their fleet, tacked, and cut off 9 ships from the main body. These ships attempted to form on the larboard tack, with a design to pass through the British line, or to leeward of it, and thus rejoin their friends. Only one succeeded; and that because she was so covered with smoke that her intention was not discovered: the others were so warmly received, that they took to flight, and did not appear again till its close. The admiral was now able to direct his attention to the enemy's main body, which was superior in every respect to his whole fleet. He made signal to tack in succession. Nelson perceived that the Spaniards were bearing up before the wind, with an intention of forming their line, and joining their separated ships; or else, of getting off without an engagement. To prevent either of these schemes, the disobeyed the signal without a moment's hesitation, and ordered his ship to be wore. This at once brought him into action with the Santissima Trinidad, 100 and 33, the San Joseph, one 100 and 12, the Salvador del Mundo, 160 and 12, the St. Nicolas, 80, the San Isidor, 74, another 74, and another first-rate. Trowbridge, in the Culloden, immediately joined, and most nobly supported him; and for nearly an hour did the Culloden and Captain maintain what Nelson called "this apparently, but not really, unequal contest;"—such was the advantage of skill and discipline, and the confidence which brave men derive from them.—The Blenheim then passing between them and the enemy, gave them a respite, and poured in her fire upon the Spaniards. The Salvador del Mundo and S. Isidro dropped astern, and were fired into, in a masterly style, by the Excellent, Capt. Collingwood. The S. Isidor struck; and Nelson thought that the Salvador struck also; "but Collingwood," says he, "disdaining the parade of taking possession of beaten enemies, most gallantly pushed up, with every sail set, to save his old friend and messmates, who was, to appearance, in a critical situation;" for the Captain was at this time actually fired upon by 3 first-rates, by the S. Nicolas, and by a 74 within about pistol-shot of that vessel. The Blenheim was ahead, the Culloden crippled and astern. Collingwood ranged up, and hauling up his mainsail just astern, passed within ten feet of the S. Nicolas, giving her a most tremendous fire, then passed on for the Santissima Trinidad.—The S. Nicolas luffing up, the S. Joseph fell on board her, and Nelson resumed his station abreast of them, and close along-side. The Captain was now incapable of farther service, either in the line or in chase: she had lost her fore-topmast; not a sail, shroud, or rope was left, and her wheel was shot away. Nelson, therefore, directed Capt. Miller to put the helm a-starboard, and, calling for the boarders, ordered them to board.



Capt. Berry, who had lately been Nelson's first lieutenant, was the first man who leaped into the enemy's mizen-chains. Miller, when in the very act of going, was ordered by Nelson to remain. Berry was supported from the spritsail-yard, which looked in the *S. Nicholas's* main rigging. A soldier of the sixty-ninth broke the upper quarter-gallery window, and jumped in, followed by the commodore himself, and by others as fast as possible. The cabin doors were fastened, and the Spanish officers fired their pistols at them through the window: the doors were soon forced, and the Spanish brigadier fell while retreating to the quarter-deck. Nelson pushed on, and found Berry in possession of the poop, and the Spanish ensign hauling down. He passed on to the fore-castle, where he met two or three Spanish officers, and received their swords. The English were now in full possession of every part of the ship; and a fire of pistols and musketry opened upon them from the admiral's stern gallery of the *San Joseph*. Nelson, having placed sentinels at the different ladders, and ordered Capt. Miller to send more men into the prize, gave orders for boarding that ship from the *San Nicholas*. It was done in an instant, he himself leading the way, and exclaiming, "Westminster Abbey or victory!" Berry assisted him into the main-chains; and that moment a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck-rail, and said they surrendered. It was not long before he was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish captain presented to him his sword, and told him the admiral was below, dying of his wounds. There, on the quarter-deck of an enemy's first-rate, he received the swords of the officers; giving them, as they were delivered, one by one, to William Fearney, one of his old *Agamemnon's*, who, with the utmost coolness, put them under his arm; "bundling them up," in the lively expression of Collingwood, "with as much composure as he would have made a faggot, though twenty-two sail of their line were still within gun-shot." One of his sailors came up, and, with an Englishman's feeling, took him by the hand, saying, he might not soon have such another place to do it in, and he was heartily glad to see him there. Twenty-four of the Captain's men were killed, and fifty-six wounded; a fourth part of the loss sustained by the whole squadron falling upon this ship. Nelson received only a few bruises.

The Spaniards had still eighteen or nineteen ships, which had suffered little or no injury: that part of the fleet separated from the main body in the morning was now coming up, and Sir John Jervis made signal to bring to. His ships could not have formed without abandoning those they had captured, and running to leeward: the Captain was lying a perfect wreck on board her two prizes; and many of the other vessels were so shattered in their masts and rigging, as to be wholly unmanageable. The Spanish admiral, meantime, according to his official account, being altogether undecided in his own opinion respecting the state of the fleet, inquired of his captains whether it was not proper to renew the action: nine of them answered explicitly, that it was not; others replied that it was expedient to delay the business. The *Pelayo* and the *Principe Conquistador* were the only ships that were for fighting.



As soon as the action was discontinued, Nelson went on board the admiral's ship. Sir John Jervis received him on the quarter-deck, took him in his arms, and said he could not sufficiently thank him. For this victory the commander-in-chief was rewarded with the title of Earl St. Vincent. Nelson had the order of Bath given him. The Spanish rear-admiral's sword he presented to the mayor and corporation of Norwich, saying, that he knew of no place where it could give him or his family more pleasure to have it kept, than in the capital city of the county where he was born. The freedom of that city was voted him. But none of the congratulations which he received affected him with deeper delight than that which came from his father. "I thank my God," said this excellent man, "with all the power of a grateful soul, for the mercies he has most graciously bestowed on me in preserving you. Not only my few acquaintances here, but the people in general, met me at every corner with such handsome words, that I was obliged to retire from the public eye. The height of glory to which your professional judgment, united with a proper degree of bravery, guarded by Providence, has raised you, few sons, my dear child, attain to, and few fathers live to see. Tears of joy have involuntarily trickled down my furrowed cheeks. Who could stand the force of such general congratulation? The name and services of Nelson have sounded through this city to Bath—from the common ballad-singer to the public theatre." The good old man concluded by telling him, that the field of glory, in which he had so long been conspicuous, was still open, and by giving him his blessing.

Sir Horatio, who had now hoisted his flag as rear-admiral of the blue, was sent to bring away the troops from Porto Ferrajo: having performed this, he shifted his flag to the *Theseus*. That ship had taken part in the mutiny in England, and being just arrived from home, some danger was apprehended from the temper of the men. This was one reason why Nelson was removed to her. He had not been on board many weeks before a paper, signed in the name of the whole ship's company, was dropped on the quarter-deck, containing these words: "Success attend Admiral Nelson! God bless Capt. Miller! We thank them for the officers they have placed over us. We are happy and comfortable; and will shed every drop of blood in our veins to support them; and the name of the *Theseus* shall be immortalized as high as her captain's." Wherever Nelson commanded, the men soon became attached to him: in ten days' time he would have restored the most mutinous ship in the navy to order.

While Sir Horatio was in the *Theseus*, he was employed in the command of the inner squadron at the blockade of Cadiz. During this service, the most perilous action occurred in which he was ever engaged. Making a night attack upon the Spanish gunboats, his barge was attacked by an armed launch, under the command of D. Miguel Tregoyen, carrying twenty-six men. Nelson had with him only his ten barge-men, Capt. Freemantle, and his coxswain, John Sykes, an old and faithful follower, who twice saved the life of his admiral, by parrying the



blows that were aimed at him, and, at last, actually interposed his own head to receive the blow of a Spanish sabre, which he could not by any other means avert. This was a desperate service; and Nelson always considered that his personal courage was more conspicuous on this occasion than on any other. Eighteen of the enemy were killed, and the rest wounded, and their launch taken. Nelson would have asked for a lieutenancy for Sykes, if had served long enough: his manner and conduct, he observed, were so entirely above his situation, that Nature certainly intended him for a gentleman: but though he recovered from the dangerous wound which he had received in this heroic act of attachment, he did not live to profit by the gratitude and friendship of his commander.

Twelve days after this rencontre, Nelson sailed at the head of an expedition against Teneriffe. A report had prevailed a few months before, that the viceroy of Mexico, with the treasure-ships had put into that island. This had led Nelson to meditate an attack upon it, which he communicated to Earl St. Vincent. He was perfectly aware of the difficulties of the attempt. "I do not," said he, "reckon myself equal to Blake: but if I recollect right, he was more obliged to the wind coming off the land than to any exertions of his own. The approach by sea to the anchoring-place is under very high land, passing three valleys; therefore the wind is either in from the sea, or squally with calms from the mountains:" and he perceived, that if the Spanish ships were won, the object would still be frustrated, if the wind did not come off shore. The land force, he thought, would render success certain; and there were the troops from Elba, with all necessary stores and artillery, already embarked. "But here," said he, "soldiers must be consulted; and I know from experience, they have not the same boldness in undertaking a political measure that we have: we look to the benefit of our country, and risk our own fame to serve her;—a soldier obeys his orders, and no more." Nelson's experience at Corsica justified this harsh opinion. The army from Elba, consisting of 3700 men, would do the business, he said, in three days, probably in much less time; and he would undertake, with a very small squadron, to perform the naval part; for, though the shore was not easy of access, the transports might run in and land the troops in one day.

The report concerning the viceroy was unfounded: but a homeward bound Manilla ship put into Santa Cruz at this time, and the expedition was determined upon. It was not fitted out upon the scale which Nelson had proposed. Four ships of the line, three frigates, and the Fox cutter formed the squadron; and he was allowed to choose such ships and officers as he thought proper. No troops were embarked; the seamen and mariners of the squadron being thought sufficient. His orders were, to make a vigorous attack; but on no account to land in person, unless his presence should be absolutely necessary. The plan was, that the boats should land in the night, between the fort on the northeast side of Santa Cruz bay and the town, make themselves masters of that fort, and send a summons to the governor. By midnight, the three frigates approached within three miles of the place; but, owing to a gale in the offing, and a strong current against them in



shore, they were not able to get within a mile of their landing place before daybreak; and then they were seen, and their intention discovered. Trowbridge and Bowen, with Capt. Oldfield, of the marine, went upon this to consult with the admiral what was to be done; and it was resolved that they should attempt to get possession of the heights above the fort. The frigates accordingly landed their men; and Nelson stood in with the line-of-battle ships, meaning to batter the fort, for the purpose of distracting the garrison. A calm and contrary current hindered him from getting within a league of the shore; and the heights were by this time secured, and manned with such a force as to be judged impracticable. Thus foiled in his plans by circumstances of wind and tide, he still considered it a point of honour that some attempt should be made. This was the 22nd of July: he re-embarked his men that night, got the ships, on the 24th, to anchor about two miles north of the town, and made show as if he intended to attack the heights. At six in the evening, signal was made for the boats to prepare to proceed on the service as previously ordered.

When this was done, Nelson addressed a letter to the commander-in-chief—the last which was ever written with his right hand. “I shall not,” said he, “enter on the subject, why we are not in possession of Santa Cruz. Your partiality will give credit, that all has hitherto been done which was possible; but without effect. This night I, humble as I am, command the whole, destined to land under the batteries of the town; and to-morrow, my head will probably be crowned either with laurel or cypress. I have only to recommend Josiah Nisbet to you and my country. The Duke of Clarence, should I fall, will. I am confident, take a lively interest for my son-in-law, should his name be mentioned.” Perfectly aware how desperate a service this was likely to prove, before he left the *Theseus*, he called lieutenant Nisbet into the cabin, that he might assist in arranging and burning his mother’s letters. Perceiving that the young man was armed, he earnestly begged him to remain behind.

He met his captains at supper, on board the *Seahorse*, Capt. Freeman-tle; whose wife presided at table. At 11 o’clock, the boats, containing between 600 and 700 men, with 181 on board the *Fox* cutter, and from 70 to 80 in a boat which had been taken the day before, proceeded in six divisions towards the town, conducted by all the captains of the squadron, except Freeman-tle and Bowen, who attended with Nelson to regulate the attack. They were to land on the mole, and thence hasten, as fast as possible, into the great square; then form and proceed, as should be found expedient. They were not discovered till about half past one o’clock, when, being within half gun-shot of the landing place, Nelson directed the boats to cast off from each other, give a huzza, and push for the shore. But the Spaniards were excellently well prepared: the alarm-bells answered the huzza, and a fire of 30 or 40 pieces of cannon, with musketry from one end of the town to the other, opened upon the invaders. Nothing, however, could check the intrepidity with which they advanced. The night was exceedingly dark:



most of the boats missed the mole, and went on shore through a raging surf, which stove all to the left of it. The admiral, Freemantle, Thompson, Bowen, and four or five other boats, found the mole: they stormed it instantly, and carried it, though defended, they imagined, by 400 or 500 men. Its guns, 26 pounders, were spiked; but such a heavy fire of musketry and grape was kept up from the citadel and the houses at the head of the mole, that the assailants could not advance, and nearly all of them were killed or wounded.

In the act of stepping out of the boat, Nelson received a shot through the right elbow, and fell; but as he fell, he caught the sword, which he had just drawn, in his left hand, and determined never to part with it while he lived, for it belonged to his uncle, Capt. Suckling, and he valued it like a relic. Nesbit, who was close to him, placed him at the bottom of the boat, and laid his hat over the shattered arm, lest the sight of the blood, which gushed out in great abundance, should increase his faintness. He then examined the wound, and taking some silk handkerchiefs from his neck, bound them round tight above the lacerated vessels. Had it not been for this presence of mind in his son-in-law, Nelson must have perished. One of his bargemen, by name Lovel, tore his shirt into shreds, and made a sling with them for the broken limb. They then collected, five other seamen, by whose assistance they succeeded in getting the boat afloat; for it had grounded with the falling tide. Nisbet got close under the guns of the battery, that they might be safe from its tremendous fire. Hearing his voice, Nelson roused himself, and desired to be lifted up in the boat. Nisbet raised him up, but nothing could be seen, except the firing of the guns on shore, and what could be seen by the flashes on the stormy sea. In a few minutes, a general shriek was heard from the crew of the Fox, which had received a shot under water, and went down. Ninety-seven men were lost in her; 83 were saved, many by Nelson himself, whose exertions greatly increased the danger of his wound. The first ship which the boat could reach happened to be the Seahorse: but nothing could induce him to go on board, though assured that if they attempted to row to another ship, it might be at the risk of his life. "I had rather suffer death," he replied, "than alarm Mrs. Freemantle, by letting her see me in this state, when I can give her no tidings whatever of her husband." They pushed on for the Theseus. When they came alongside, he peremptorily refused all assistance in getting on board, so impatient was he that the boat should return, in hopes that it might save a few more from the Fox. He desired to have only a single rope thrown over the side, which he twisted round his left hand, saying, "Let me alone: I have yet my legs left and one arm. Tell the surgeon to make haste and get his instruments. I know I must lose my right arm; so the sooner it is off the better."

Freemantle had been severely wounded in the right arm, soon after the admiral. He was fortunate enough to find a boat at the beach, and got instantly to the ship. Thompson was wounded: Bowen killed, to the great regret of Nelson; as was also one of his own officers, Lieut.



**Weatherhead.** Trowbridge missed the mole in the darkness, but pushed on shore under the batteries, close to the south end of the citadel. Capt. Waller, of the *Emerald*, and two or three other boats landed at the same time. The surf was so high that many others put back. The boats were instantly filled with water, and stove against the rocks; and most of the ammunition in the men's pouches was wetted. Having collected a few men, they pushed on to the great square, hoping there to find the admiral and the rest of the force. The ladders were all lost, so that they could make no immediate attempt on the citadel; but they sent a sergeant with two of the town's people to summon it: this messenger never returned; and Trowbridge, having waited about an hour, marched to join captains Hood and Miller, who had landed to the southwest. They then endeavoured to procure some intelligence of the admiral and the rest of the officers, but without success. By daybreak they had gathered about 80 marines, 80 pikemen, and 180 small-arm seamen; all the survivors of those who had made good their landing. They obtained some ammunition from the prisoners whom they had taken, and marched on, to try what could be done at the citadel without ladders. They found all the streets commanded by field-pieces, and several thousand Spaniards, with about a hundred French, under arms, approaching by every avenue. Finding himself without provisions, the powder wet, and no possibility of obtaining either stores or reinforcements from the ships, Trowbridge sent Capt. Samuel Hood with a flag of truce to the governor, to say he was prepared to burn the town, and would instantly set fire to it if the Spaniards approached one inch nearer: this, however, if he were compelled to do it, he should do with regret, for he had no wish to injure the inhabitants; and he was ready to treat upon these terms:—that the British troops should re-embark, with all their arms, of every kind, and take their own boats, if they were saved, or be provided with such others as might be wanting: they engaging that the squadron should not molest the town, nor any of the Canary Islands: all prisoners on both sides to be given up. When these terms were proposed, the governor replied, that the English ought to surrender as prisoners of war; but Capt. Hood returned, he was instructed to say, that if the terms were not accepted in five minutes, Capt. Trowbridge would set the town on fire and attack the Spaniards at the point of the bayonet. Satisfied with his success, and respecting the gallantry of his enemy, the Spaniard acceded to the proposal, found boats to re-embark them, and before they parted gave every man a loaf and a pint of wine.

The total loss of the English amounted to 250. Nelson made no mention of his own wound in his official despatches: but in a private letter to Lord St. Vincent—the first which he wrote with his left hand—he shows himself to have been deeply affected by the failure of this enterprise. “I am become,” he said, “a burden to my friends, and useless to my country: but by my last letter you will perceive my anxiety for the promotion of my son-in-law, Josiah Nisbet. When I leave your command, I become dead to the world—I go hence, and am no more



seen.' If from poor Bowen's loss you think proper to oblige me, I rest confident you will do it. The boy is under obligations to me; but he repaid me, by bringing me from the mole of Santa Cruz. I hope you will be able to give me a frigate, to convey the remains of my carcass to England." "A left-handed admiral," he said, in a subsequent letter, "will never again be considered as useful; therefore, the sooner I get to a very humble cottage the better; and make room for a sounder man to serve the state." His first letter to Lady Nelson was written under the same opinion, but in a more cheerful strain. "It was the chance of war," said he, "and I have great reason to be thankful: and I know it will add much to your pleasure to find that Josiah, under God's providence, was chiefly instrumental in saving my life. I should not be surprised if I am neglected and forgotten: probably I shall no longer be considered useful; however, I shall feel rich if I continue to enjoy your affection. I beg neither you nor my father will think much of this mishap: my mind has long been made up to such an event."

His son-in-law was immediately promoted; and honours enough to heal his wounded spirit awaited him in England. Letters were addressed to him by the first lord of the Admiralty, and by his steady friend, the Duke of Clarence, to congratulate him on his return, covered with glory. He assured the duke, in his reply, that no scrap of that ardor, with which he had hitherto served his king, had been shot away. The freedom of the cities of Bristol and London were transmitted to him: he was invested with the order of the Bath; and received a pension of £1000 a year. The memorial which, as a matter of form, he was called upon to present on this occasion, exhibited an extraordinary catalogue of services rendered during the war. It stated that he had been in four actions with the fleets of the enemy, and in three actions with boats employed in cutting out of harbor, in destroying vessels, and in taking three towns: he had served on shore with the army four months, and commanded the batteries during the close sieges of Bastia and Calvi: he had assisted at the capture of seven sail of the line, six frigates, four corvettes, and eleven privateers: taken and destroyed near fifty sail of merchant vessels; and actually been engaged against the enemy upwards of a hundred and twenty times; in which service he had lost his right eye and right arm, and been severely wounded in his body.

His sufferings from the lost limb were long and painful; a nerve had been taken up in one of the ligatures at the time of the operation; and the ligature, according to the practice of the French surgeons, was of silk, instead of waxed thread: this produced a constant irritation and discharge; and the ends of the ligature being pulled every day, in hopes of bringing it away, occasioned a fresh agony. He had scarcely any intermission of pain, day or night, for three months after his return to England. Lady Nelson, at his earnest request, attended the dressing his arm, till she had acquired sufficient resolution and skill to dress it herself. One night, during this state of suffering, Nelson retired early to bed, in hope of enjoy some respite by means of laudanum. He was at that time lodging in Bond-street; and the family were soon disturbed



by a mob knocking loudly and violently at the door. The news of Duncan's victory had been made public, and the house was not illuminated. But when the the mob were told that Admiral Nelson lay there in bed, badly wounded, the foremost of them answered, "You shall hear no more from us to-night:" and, in fact, the feeling of sympathy and respect was communicated from one to another with such effect, that, under the confusion of such a night, the house was not molested again.

About the end of November, after a night of sound sleep, he found the arm nearly free from pain: the surgeon was immediately sent for to examine it; and the ligature came away with the slightest touch. From that time it began to heal. As soon as he thought his health established, he sent the following form of thanksgiving to the minister of St. George's—Hanover-square: "An officer desires to return thanks to Almighty God for his perfect recovery from a severe wound, and also for the many mercies bestowed on him."

Not having been in England till now, since he lost his eye, he went to receive a year's pay, as smart money; but could not obtain payment, because he had neglected to bring a certificate from a surgeon, that the sight was destroyed. A little irritated that this form should be insisted upon, because, though the fact was not apparent, he thought it was sufficiently notorious, he procured a certificate, at the same time, for the loss of his arm; saying, they might just as well doubt one as the other. This put him in good humour with himself, and with the clerk who had offended him. On his return to the office, the clerk finding it was only the annual pay of a captain, observed, he thought it had been more. "Oh!" replied Nelson, "this is only for an eye. In a few days I shall come for an arm; and in a little time longer, God knows, most probably for a leg." Accordingly, he soon afterward went; and with perfect good humour exhibited the certificate of the loss of his arm.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Nelson rejoins Earl St. Vincent in the Vanguard—Sails in Pursuit of the French to Egypt—Returns to Sicily, and sails again to Egypt—Battle of the Nile.*

EARLY in the year 1798, Sir Horatio Nelson hoisted his flag in the Vanguard, and was ordered to rejoin Earl St. Vincent. Upon his departure, his father addressed him with that affectionate solemnity by which all his letters were distinguished. "I trust in the Lord," said he, "that he will prosper your going out and your coming in. I earnestly desired once more to see you, and that wish has been heard. If I should presume to say, I hope to see you again, the question will readily be asked, How old art thou?" It is said that a gloomy foreboding hung on the spirits of Lady Nelson at their parting. This could have arisen only from the dread of losing him by the chance of war. Any



apprehension of losing his affections could hardly have existed; for all his correspondence to this time shows that he thought himself happy in his marriage; and his private character had hitherto been as spotless as his public conduct. One of the last things he said to her was, that his own ambition was satisfied, but that he went to raise her to that rank in which he had long wished to see her.

Immediately on rejoining the fleet, he was despatched to the Mediterranean, with a small squadron, in order to ascertain the object of the great expedition which at that time was fitting out, under Buonaparte, at Toulon. The defeat of this armament was deemed by the British government a paramount object; and Earl St. Vincent was directed, if he thought it necessary, to take his whole force into the Mediterranean; to relinquish, for that purpose, the blockade of the Spanish fleet: but if he should deem a detachment sufficient, "I think it almost unnecessary," said the first lord of the Admiralty, "the propriety of putting it under Sir Horatio Nelson." It is to the honour of Earl St. Vincent, that he had already made the same choice. This appointment to a service in which so much honour might be acquired, gave great offence to the senior admirals of the fleet. Sir William Parker and Sir John Orde each wrote to Lord Spencer, complaining that so marked a preference should have been given to a junior of the same fleet.

The armament at Toulon consisted of 13 ships of the line, 7 forty-gun frigates, with 24 smaller vessels of war, and nearly 200 transports. Mr. Udney, our consul at Leghorn, was the first person who procured certain intelligence of the enemy's design against Malta; and from his own sagacity foresaw that Egypt must be their after-object. Nelson sailed from Gibraltar on the 9th of May, with the Vanguard, Orion, and Alexander, seventy-fours; the Caroline, Flora, Emerald, frigates; and the Bonne Citoyenne sloop of war; to watch this formidable armament. On the 19th, when they were in the Gulf of Lyons, a gale came on from the N.W. It moderated so much on the 20th, as to enable them to get their top-gallant-masts and yards aloft. After dark it again began to blow strong: but the ships had been prepared for a gale, and therefore Nelson's mind was easy. Shortly after midnight, however, his main-top-mast went over the side, and the mizen-top-mast soon afterward. The night was so tempestuous, that it was impossible for any signal either to be seen or heard; and Nelson determined, as soon as it should be daybreak, to wear, and scud before the wind: but at half past three the fore-mast went in three pieces, and the bowsprit was found to be sprung in three places. When day broke, they succeeded in wearing the ship with a remnant of her sprit-sail: the Vanguard was at that time 25 leagues south of the islands of Hieres, with her head lying to the N. E.—and if she had not wore, the ship must have drifted to Corsica. Capt. Ball, in the Alexander, took her in tow to carry her into the Sardinian harbor of St. Pietro. Nelson, apprehensive that this attempt might endanger both vessels, ordered him to cast off: but that excellent officer replied, he was confident he could save the Vanguard, and by God's help he would do it. There had been a previous coolness between these great men; but from this time Nelson was fully sensible of the extraordinary talents of Captain Ball, and a sincere friendship subsisted between them during the remainder of their lives. "I ought not," said the admiral, writing to his wife—"I ought not to call what has happened to the Vanguard



by the cold name of accident: I believe firmly it was the Almighty's goodness to check my consummate vanity. I hope it has made me a better officer, as I feel confident it has made me a better man. Figure to yourself, on Sunday evening, at sunset, a vain man walking in his cabin, with a squadron around him, who looked up to their chief to lead them to glory, and in whom their chief placed the firmest reliance that the proudest ships of equal numbers belonging to France would have lowered their flags;—figure to yourself, on Monday morning, when the sun rose, this proud man, his ship dismasted, his fleet dispersed, and himself in such distress, that the meanest frigate out of France would have been an unwelcome guest." Nelson had, indeed, more reason to refuse the cold name of accident to this tempest, than he was then aware of; for on that very day, the French fleet sailed from Toulon, and must have passed within a few leagues of his little squadron, which was thus preserved by the thick weather that came on.

The British government, at this time, with a becoming spirit, gave orders, that any port in the Mediterranean should be considered as hostile, where the governor, or chief magistrate, should refuse to let our ships of war procure supplies of provisions, or of any article which they might require.

In these orders the ports of Sardinia were excepted. The continental possessions of the king of Sardinia were at this time completely at the mercy of the French, and that prince was now discovering, that the terms to which he had consented, necessarily involved the loss of the dominions which they were intended to preserve. The citadel of Turin was occupied by French troops; and his wretched court feared to afford the common rights of humanity to British ships, lest it should give the French occasion to seize on the remainder of his dominions: a measure for which, it was certain they would soon make a pretext, if they did not find one. Nelson was informed that he could not enter the port of St. Pietro. Regardless of this interdict, which would have been an act of suicidal folly to have regarded, he anchored in the harbour; and by the exertions of Sir J. Sumarez, Capts. Ball and Berry, the Vanguard was refitted in four days; months would have been employed in refitting her in England. Nelson especially recommended to Earl St. Vincent the carpenter of the Alexander, under whose directions the ship had been repaired; and begging most earnestly that the commander-in-chief would recommend him to the notice of the board of admiralty. He did not leave the harbour without expressing his sense of the treatment he had received, in a letter to the Viceroy:—"Sir, having sustained some damages, I anchored a small part of his majesty's fleet off this island, and was surprised to hear that admittance was to be refused to the flag of his Britannic majesty into this port. When I reflect that my most gracious sovereign is the oldest, and certainly the most faithful ally which the king of Sardinia ever had, I could feel the sorrow which it must have been to his majesty to have given such an order. I cannot but look at the African shore, where the followers of Mahomet are performing the part of the good Samaritan, which I look in vain at St. Peter's, where it is said the Christian religion is professed." The delay thus occasioned was useful to him in many respects: it enabled him to complete his supply of water, and to receive a reinforcement, which Earl St. Vincent was enabled to send him. It consisted of the best ships of his fleet; the Culloden, 74,



Capt. Trowbridge; Goliath, 74, Capt. T. Foley; Minotaur, 74, Capt. Louis; Defence, 74, Capt. Peyton; Bellorophon, 74, Capt. Darby; Majestic, 74, Capt. Westcott; Zealous, 74, Capt. Hood; Swiftsure, 74, Capt. Hallowell; Theseus, 74, Capt. Miller; Audacious, 74, Capt. Gould. The Leander, 50, Thompson, was afterward added. These ships were made ready for the service as soon as Earl St. Vincent received advice from England that he was to be reinforced. As soon as the reinforcement was seen, off Cadiz Bay, signal was immediately made to Capt. Trowbridge to put to sea. He took no instructions to Nelson as to the course he was to steer, nor any certain account of the enemy's destination: every thing was left to his own judgment.—The frigates had been separated from him in the tempest, and had not been able to rejoin: they sought him unsuccessfully in the Bay of Naples, where they obtained no tidings of his course; and he sailed without them. The first news of the enemy's armament was, that it had surprised Malta. Nelson formed a plan for attacking it while at anchor at Gozo; but on the 22d June, intelligence reached him that the French had left that island on the 16th. It was clear that their destination was eastward—he thought for Egypt—and for Egypt, he made sail. Had the frigates been with him he could scarcely have failed to gain information of the enemy: for want of them he only spoke three vessels on the way; and neither of them had seen any thing of the French. He arrived off Alexandria on the 28th, and the enemy were not there, neither was there any account of them; but the governor was endeavouring to put the city in a state of defence, having received advice from Leghorn, that the French expedition was intended against Egypt, after it had taken Malta. Nelson then shaped his course to the northward, for Caramania, and steered from thence along the southern side of Candia, carrying a press of sail. It would have been his delight, he said, to have tried Buonaparte on a wind. It would have been the delight of Europe, too, if that fleet had been overtaken with its general on board. It would have spared him his defeat at Acre—his only disgrace; for to have been defeated by Nelson upon the seas would not have been disgraceful: it would have spared him all his after-enormities. Hitherto his career has been glorious; the baneful principles of his heart had never yet passed his lips: history would have represented him as a soldier of fortune. Conceiving that when an officer is not successful in his plans it is absolutely necessary that he should explain the motives upon which they were founded, Nelson wrote at this time an account and vindication of his conduct for having carried the fleet to Egypt. The objection which he anticipated was, that he ought not to have made so long a voyage without more certain information. “My answer,” said he, “is ready—Who was I to get it from? The governments of Naples and Sicily either knew not, or chose to keep me in ignorance. Was I to wait patiently until I heard certain accounts? If Egypt were their object, before I could hear of them they would have been in India. To do nothing was disgraceful; therefore I made use of my understanding. I am before your lordships' judgment.” Capt. Ball, to whom he showed this paper, told him, he should recommend a friend never to begin a defence of his conduct before he was accused of error: he might give the fullest reasons for what he had done, expressed in such terms as would evince that he had acted from the strongest conviction of being right; and of course



he must expect that the public would view it in the same light. Capt. Ball judged rightly of the public, whose first impulses are generally founded upon just feelings. But the public are easily misled, and there are always persons ready to mislead them. Nelson had not yet attained that fame which compels envy to be silent; and when it was known in England that he had returned after an unsuccessful pursuit, it was said that he deserved impeachment; and Earl St. Vincent was severely censured for having sent so young an officer upon so important a service.

Baffled in his pursuit, he returned to Sicily. The Neapolitan ministry had determined to give his squadron no assistance, being resolved to do nothing which could endanger their peace with the French directory: by means, however, of Lady Hamilton's influence at court, he procured secret orders to the Sicilian governors; and under those orders, obtained every thing which he wanted at Syracuse: a timely supply; without which, he always said, he could not have recommenced his pursuit with any hope of success. "It is an old saying," said he, "that the Devil's children have the Devil's luck. I cannot to this moment learn, beyond vague conjecture, where the French fleet are gone to: and having gone a round of 600 leagues, at this season of the year, with an expedition incredible, here I am, as ignorant of the situation of the enemy as I was 27 days ago. Every moment I have to regret the frigate's having left me; had one half of them been with me, I could not have wanted information. Should the French be so strongly secured in port that I cannot get at them, I shall immediately shift my flag into some other ship, and send the Vanguard to Naples to be refitted; for hardly any person but myself would have continued on service so long in such a wretched state." Vexed, however, and disappointed as he was, Nelson was still full of hope. "Thanks to your exertions," writing to Sir W. and Lady Hamilton, "we have victualled and watered; and surely watering at the fount of Arethusa, we must have victory. We shall sail with the first breeze; and be assured I will return either crowned with laurel, or covered with cypress." Earl St. Vincent he assured, that if the French were above water, he would find them out: he still held his opinion that they were bound for Egypt: "but," said he, to the first lord of the Admiralty, "be they bound to the antipodes, your lordship may rely that I will not lose a moment in bringing them to action."

On the 25th of July, he sailed from Syracuse for the Morea. Anxious beyond measure, and irritated that the enemy should so long have eluded him, the tediousness of the night made him impatient; and the officer of the watch was repeatedly called on to let him know the hour, and convince him, who measured time by his own eagerness, that it was not yet daybreak. The squadron left the Gulf of Corun on the 28th. Trowbridge entered the port, and returned with intelligence that the French had been seen about four weeks before, steering to the S. E. from Candia. Nelson then determined immediately to return to Alexandria: and the British fleet accordingly, with every sail set, stood once more for the coast of Egypt. On the 1st of August, about ten in



the morning, they came in sight of Alexandria: the port had been vacant and solitary when they saw it last; it was now crowded with ships, and they perceived, with exultation, that the tricolour flag was flying upon the walls. At four in the afternoon, Capt. Hood, in the *Zealous*, made the signal for the enemy's fleet. For many preceding days Nelson had hardly taken either sleep or food: he now ordered his dinner to be served, while preparations were making for battle; and when his officers rose from table, and went to their separate stations, he said to them, "Before this time to-morrow, I shall have gained a peerage, or Westminster Abbey."

The French, steering direct for Candia, had made an angular passage for Alexandria; whereas Nelson, in pursuit of them, made straight for that place, and thus materially shortened the distance. The comparative smallness of his force made it necessary to sail in close order, and it covered a less space than it would have done if the frigates had been with him: the weather also was constantly hazy. These circumstances prevented the English from discovering the enemy on the way to Egypt, though it appeared upon examining the journals of the French officers taken in the action, that the two fleets must actually have crossed on the night of the 22nd of June. During the return to Syracuse, the chances of falling in with them were fewer.

Why Buonaparte, having effected his landing, should not have suffered the fleet to return, has never yet been explained. Thus much is certain, that it was detained by his command; though he accused Admiral Brueys, of having lingered on the coast, contrary to orders. The French fleet arrived at Alexandria on the 1st of July; and Brueys, not being able to enter the port, which time and neglect had ruined, moored his ships in Aboukir Bay, in a strong and compact line of battle; the headmost vessel being as close as possible to a shoal on the N. W. and the rest of the fleet forming a kind of curve along the line of deep water, so as not to be turned by any means in the S. W. By Buonaparte's desire, he had offered a reward of 10,000 livres to any pilot of the country who would carry the squadron in; but none could be found who would venture to take charge of a single vessel drawing more than 20 feet. He had therefore made the best of his situation.—The commissary of the fleet said, they were moored in such a manner as to bid defiance to a force more than double their own. Admiral Barrington, when moored in a similar manner off St. Lucia, in the year 1778, beat off the *Compte d'Estaing* in three several attacks, though his force was inferior by one-third. Here, the advantage every way, was in favour of the French. They had 13 ships of the line and 4 frigates, carrying 1196 guns, and 11,230 men. The English had the same number of ships of the line, and one 50 gun ship, carrying 1012 guns, and 8,68 men. The English ships were all 74: the French had three 80 gun ships, and one three-decker of 120. During the whole pursuit, it had been Nelson's practice, whenever circumstances would permit, to have his captains on board the *Vanguard*, and explain to them his own ideas of the different and best modes of attack, and such plans as he proposed to execute, on falling in with the enemy, whatever their situation might be. His officers were thus fully acquainted with his principles of tactics: and such was his confidence in their a-



bilities, that the only thing determined upon, in case they should find the French at anchor, was for the ships to form as most convenient for their mutual support, and to anchor by the stern. "First gain the victory," he said, "and then make the best use of it you can." The moment he perceived the position of the French, that intuitive genius, with which Nelson was endowed, displayed itself. The plan which he intended to pursue, was to keep entirely on the outer side of the French line, and station his ships, as far as he was able, one on the outer bow, and another on the outer quarter, of each of the enemy's.

As the squadron advanced, they were assailed by a shower of shot and shells from the batteries on the island, and the enemy opened a steady fire from the starboard side of their whole line, within half gun shot distance, full into the bows of our van-ships. It was received in silence: the men on board every ship were employed aloft in furling sails, and below in tending the braces, and making ready for anchoring. A miserable sight for the French; who, with all their skill, and all their courage, and all their advantages of numbers and situation, were upon that element, on which, when the hour of trial comes, a Frenchman has no hope. Admiral Brueys was a brave and able man; yet the indelible character of his country broke out in one of his letters, wherein he delivered it as his opinion that the English had missed him, because, not being superior in force, they did not think it prudent to try their strength with him.—The moment was now come in which he was to be undeceived. A French brig was instructed to decoy the English, by manœuvring so as to tempt them towards a shoal lying off the island of Bekier; but Nelson either knew the danger, or suspected some deceit: and the lure was unsuccessful. Capt. Foley led the way in the *Goliath*, out-sailing the *Zealous*, which for some minutes disputed this post of honour with him. He had long conceived that if the enemy were moored in line of battle in with the land, the best plan of attack would be, to lead between them and the shore, because the French guns on that side were not likely to be manned, nor even ready for action. Intending, therefore, to fix himself on the inner bow of the *Guerrier*, he kept as near the edge of the bank as the depth of water would admit; but his anchor hung, and having opened his fire, he drifted to the second ship, the *Conquerant*, before it was clear; then anchored by the stern, inside of her, and in ten minutes shot away her mast. Hood, in the *Zealous*, perceiving this, took the station which the *Goliath* intended to have occupied, and totally disabled the *Guerrier* in twelve minutes. The third ship which doubled the enemy's van was the *Orion*; she passed to windward of the *Zealous*, and opened her larboard guns as long as they bore on the *Guerrier*; then passing inside the *Goliath*, sunk a frigate which annoyed her, hauled round towards the French line, and anchoring inside, between the fifth and sixth ships from the *Guerrier*, took her station on the larboard bow of the *Franklin*, and the quarter of the *Peuple Souverain*, receiving and returning the fire of both. The sun was now nearly down. The *Audacious*, Capt. Gould, pouring a heavy fire into the *Guerrier* and the *Conquerant*, fixed herself on the larboard bow of the latter; and when that ship struck, passed on to the *Peuple Souverain*. The *Theseus* followed, brought down the *Guerrier*'s remaining main and mizen-masts, then anchored inside of the *Spartiate*, the third in the French line. While these advanced ships doubled the French line, the Van-



guard was the first that anchored on the outer side of the enemy, within half-pistol-shot of their third ship, the Spartiate. Nelson had six colours flying in different parts of his rigging, lest they should be shot away;—that they should be struck, no British admiral considers as a possibility. He veered half a cable, and opened a tremendous fire; under cover of which the other four ships of his division, the Minotaur, Bellerophon, Defence, and Majestic, sailed on ahead of the admiral. In a few minutes, every man stationed at the first six guns in the fore part of the Vanguard's deck was killed or wounded: these guns were three times cleared. The action commenced at half after six; about 7, night closed, and there was no other light than that from the fire of the contending fleets. Trowbridge, in the Culloden, then foremost of the remaining ships, was two leagues astern. He came on sounding, as the others had done; as he advanced, the increasing darkness increased the difficulty of the navigation; and suddenly, after having found 11 fathoms of water, before the lead could be hove again, he was fast aground; nor could all his own exertions, joined to those of the Leander and the Mutine brig, which came to his assistance, get him off in time to bear a part in the action. His ship, however, served as a beacon to the Alexander and Swiftsure, which would else, from the course which they were holding, have gone considerably farther on the reef, and must inevitably have been lost. These ships entered the bay, and took their stations, in the darkness, in a manner still spoken of with admiration by all who remembered it. Capt. Hallowell, in the Swiftsure, as he was bearing down, fell in with what seemed to be a strange sail: Nelson had directed his ships to hoist four lights horizontally at the mizen-peak, as soon as it became dark; and this vessel had no such distinction. Hallowell, with great judgment, ordered his men not to fire: if she was an enemy, he said, she was in too disabled a state to escape. It was the Bellerophon, overpowered by the huge ORIENT: her lights had gone overboard, nearly 200 of her crew were killed or wounded, all her masts and cables had been shot away; and she was drifting out of the line, towards the lee side of the bay. Her station was occupied by the Swiftsure, which opened a steady fire on the quarter of the Franklin and the bows of the French admiral. At the same instant, the Alexander passed under his stern, and anchored within-side on his larboard quarter, raking him, and keeping up a severe fire of musketry upon his decks. The last ship which arrived to complete the destruction of the enemy was the Leander.—Capt. Thompson, finding that nothing could be done that night to get off the Culloden, advanced with the intention of anchoring athwart-hawse of the Orient. The first two ships of the French line had been dismasted within a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the action; and the others had at that time suffered so severely, that victory was already certain. The third, fourth, and fifth were taken possession of at half past eight. Meantime, Nelson received a severe wound on the head from a piece of langridge shot. Capt. Barry caught him in his arms as he was falling. The great effusion of blood occasioned an apprehension that the wound was mortal: Nelson himself thought so: a large flap of the skin of the forehead, cut from the bone, had fallen over one eye: and the other being blind, he was in total darkness. When he was carried down, the surgeon, with a natural and pardonable eagerness, quitted the poor fellow then under his hands, that he



might instantly attend the admiral. "No!" said Nelson, "I will take my turn with my brave fellows." Nor would he suffer his own wound to be examined till every man who had been previously wounded was properly attended to. Fully believing that the wound was mortal, and that he was about to die, as he had ever desired, in battle and in victory, he called the chaplain, and desired him to deliver what he supposed to be his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson; he then sent for Capt. Louis, that he might thank him personally for the great assistance which he had rendered to the Vanguard; and appointed Capt. Hardy from the brig to the command of his own ship, Capt. Berry having to go home with the news of the victory. When the surgeon came in due time to examine his wound, the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the whole crew, when they heard that the hurt was merely superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure, than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. The surgeon requested him to remain quiet: but Nelson could not rest. He called for his secretary, Campbell, to write the despatches. Campbell had himself been wounded; and was so affected at the blind and suffering state of the admiral, that he was unable to write. The chaplain was then sent for; but, before he came, Nelson took the pen, and contrived to trace a few words, marking his devout sense of the success which had already been obtained. He was now left alone; when suddenly a cry was heard that the *Orient* was on fire. In the confusion, he found his way up, unassisted and unnoticed; and, to the astonishment of every one, appeared on the quarter-deck, where he immediately gave order that boats should be sent to the relief of the enemy. It was soon after nine that the fire on board the *Orient* broke out. Brueys was dead: he had received three wounds, yet would not leave his post: a fourth cut him almost in two. He desired not to be carried, but to be left to die upon deck. The flames soon mastered his ship. By the prodigious light of this conflagration, the situation of the two fleets could now be perceived, the colours of both being clearly distinguishable. The ship blew up with a shock which was felt to the very bottom of every vessel.—Many of her officers and men jumped overhead, some clinging to the spars and pieces of wreck with which the sea was strewn, others swimming to escape from the destruction which they momentarily dreaded.—Some were picked up by our boats. The greater part of her crew, however, stood the danger till the last, and continued to fire from the lower deck. This tremendous explosion was followed by a silence not less awful: the firing immediately ceased on both sides: and the first sound which broke the silence, was the dash of her shattered masts and yards, falling into the water from the vast height to which they had been expended. It is upon record, that a battle between two armies was once broken off by an earthquake:—such an event would be felt like a miracle; but no incident in war, produced by human means, has ever equalled the sublimity of this co-instantaneous pause, and all its circumstances. About 70 of the *Orient's* crew were saved by the English boats. Among the many hundreds who perished, were the commodore, Casa-Bianca, and his son, a brave boy, only ten years old. They were seen floating on a shattered mast when the ship blew up. She had money on board (the plunder of Malta) to the amount of £500,000 sterling. Two large pieces of burning wreck fell into the main and fore-tops of the *Swiftsure* without injuring any person.—A



port fire also fell into the *Alexander*. Capt. Ball had provided against any such danger. All the shrouds and sails of his ship, not absolutely necessary for its immediate management, were thoroughly wetted, and so rolled up, that they were as hard and as little inflammable as so many solid cylinders. The firing recommenced with the ships to leeward of the centre, and continued till about 3. It was generally believed by the officers, that if Nelson had not been wounded, not one of these ships could have escaped: the four certainly could not, if the *Culloden* had got into action: and if the frigates belonging to the squadron had been present, not one of the enemy's fleet would have left Aboukir Bay. Four vessels were all that escaped; and the victory was the most complete and glorious in the annals of naval history.—“Victory,” said Nelson, “is not a name strong enough for such a scene;” he called it a conquest. Of 13 sail of the line 9 were taken and 2 burned: of the 4 frigates, one was sunk, another, the *Artemise*, was burned in a villainous manner by her captain, who, having fired a broadside at the *Theseus*, struck his colours, then set fire to the ship, and escaped with most of his crew to shore. The British loss, in killed and wounded, amounted to 895. Westcott was the only captain who fell; 3,105 of the French, including the wounded, were sent on shore by cartel, and 5,225 perished.

As soon as the conquest was completed, Nelson sent orders through the fleet, to return thanksgiving in every ship for the victory. The French at Rosetta, who with miserable fear beheld the engagement, were at a loss to understand the stillness of the fleet during the performance of this solemn duty; but it seemed to affect many of the prisoners, officers as well as men: and graceless and godless as the officers were, some of them remarked, that it was no wonder such order was preserved in the British navy, when the minds of our men could be impressed with such sentiments after such a great victory. The French at Rosetta, seeing their ships sail out of the bay unmolested, endeavoured to persuade themselves that they were in possession of the place of battle. But it was in vain thus to attempt to deceive themselves: and could they have succeeded, the bonfires which the Arabs kindled along the whole coast, and over the country, for three following nights, would have undeceived them. Long after the battle, innumerable dead bodies were seen floating about the bay. Great numbers were cast upon the Isle of Bekier, (since called Nelson's Island,) and our sailors raised mounds of sand over them. Even after three years, Dr. Clarke saw them, and assisted in interring heaps of human bodies, which, where there were no jackals to devour them, presented a sight loathsome to humanity. The shore, for an extent of four leagues, was covered with wreck; and the Arabs found employment for many days in burning on the beach the fragments for the sake of the iron. Part of the *Orient's* mainmast was picked up by the *Swiftsure*. Capt. Hallowell ordered his carpenter to make a coffin of it; it was finished as well as the workman's skill and materials would permit; and Hallowell then sent it to the admiral with the following letter:—“Sir, I have taken the liberty of presenting you a coffin, made from the mainmast of *l'Orient*, that when you have finished your military career in this world, you may be



buried in one of your trophies. But that that period may be far distant, is the earnest wish of your sincere friend, Benjamin Hallowell."—An offering so strange, and yet so suited to the occasion, was received by Nelson in the spirit in which it was sent. As he felt it good for him to have death before his eyes, he ordered the coffin to be placed upright in his cabin. An old favorite servant entreated him so earnestly to let it be removed, that at length he consented to have the coffin carried below; but he gave strict orders that it should be safely stowed, and reserved for the purpose for which its donor had designed it.

The victory was complete; but Nelson could not pursue it as he would have done, for want of means. Had he been provided with small craft, nothing could have prevented the destruction of the store-ships and transports in the port of Alexandria: four bomb-vessels would have destroyed the whole in a few hours. "Were I to die this moment," said he, "*want of frigates* would be found stamped on my heart! No words of mine can express what I suffered, and am suffering, for want of them." He had also to bear up against great bodily suffering: the blow had so shaken his head, that from its constant and violent aching, and the perpetual sickness which accompanied the pain, he could scarcely persuade himself that the skull was not fractured. Had it not been for Trowbridge, Ball, Hood, he declared he should have sunk under the fatigue of refitting the squadron. "All," he said, "had done well; but these officers were his supporters." But, amid his sufferings and exertions, Nelson could yet think of all the consequences of his victory; and that no advantage from it might be lost, he despatched an officer over land to India, with letters to the governor of Bombay, informing him of the arrival of the French in Egypt, the total destruction of their fleet, and the consequent preservation of India from any attempt against it. This despatch he sent upon his own responsibility, with letters of credit upon the East India Company, addressed to the British consuls, vice-consuls, and merchants on his route; Nelson saying, "that if he had done wrong, he hoped the bills would be paid, and he would repay the company: for, as an Englishman, he should be proud that it had been in his power to put our settlements on their guard." This information was of great importance. Orders had just been received for defensive preparations; and the extraordinary expenses which would otherwise have been incurred, were thus prevented.

Nelson was now at the summit of glory: congratulations, rewards, and honours, were showered upon him by all the states, and princes, and powers to whom his victory gave a respite. The first communication of this nature was from the Turkish sultan; who had called upon all true believers to take arms against those swinish infidels the French, that they might deliver these blessed habitations from their accursed hands; and who had ordered his pachas to turn night into day in their efforts to take vengeance. The present was a pelisse of sables, with broad sleeves, valued at \$5000; and a diamond aigrette, valued at 18000: the most honorable badge among the Turks; and in this instance more especially honorable, because it was taken from one of the royal



turbans. "If it were worth a million," said Nelson to his wife, "my pleasure would be to see it in your possession." The sultan also sent, in a spirit worthy of imitation, a purse of 2000 sequins, to be distributed among the wounded. The mother of the sultan sent him a box, set with diamonds, valued at £1000. The czar Paul, in whom the better part of his strangely compounded nature at this time predominated, presented him with his portrait, set in diamonds, in a gold box, accompanied by a letter of congratulation, written with his own hand. The king of Sardinia also wrote to him, and sent a gold box set with diamonds. Honours in profusion were awaiting him at Naples. In his own country the king granted these honorable augmentations to his armorial ensign: a chief undulated, argent; thereon waves of the sea; from which a palm tree issuant, between a disabled ship on the dexter, and a ruined battery on the sinister, all proper: and for his crest, on a raval crown, or, the chelengk, or plume, presented to him by the Turk, with the motto, *Palmarum qui meruit ferat*. And to his supporters, being a sailor on the dexter, and a lion on the sinister, were given these honourable augmentations: a palm branch in the sailor's hand, and another in the paw of the lion, both proper; with a tricoloured flag and staff in the lion's mouth. He was created Baron Nelson of the Nile, and and of Burnham Thorpe, with a pension of £2000 for his own life, and those of two immediate successors. When the grant was moved in the house of commons, General Walpole expressed an opinion, that a higher degree of rank ought to be conferred. Mr. Pitt made answer that he thought it needless to enter into that question. "Admiral Nelson's fame," he said, "would be co-equal with the British name; and it would be remembered that he had obtained the greatest naval victory on record, when no man would think of asking whether he had been created a baron, a viscount, or an earl." It depended upon the degree of rank what should be the fashion of his coronet, in what page of the red book his name should be inserted, and what precedency should be allowed his lady in the drawing-room and the ball. That Nelson's honours were affected thus far, and no farther, might be conceded to Mr. Pitt and his colleagues in administration: but the degree of rank which they thought proper to allot, was the measure of their gratitude, though not of his services. This Nelson felt; and this he expressed, with indignation, among his friends.

Whatever might have been the motives of the ministry, the importance and magnitude of the victory were universally acknowledged. A grant of £10,000 was voted to Nelson by the East India Company; the Turkish company presented him with a piece of plate; the city of London presented a sword to him and to each of his captains; gold medals were presented to the captains, and the first lieutenants were promoted, as had been done after Lord Howe's victory. Nelson was exceedingly anxious that the captain and first lieutenant of the Culloden should not be passed over because of their misfortune. The private letter from the Admiralty to Nelson informed him, that the first lieutenants of all the ships engaged were to be promoted. Nelson instantly



wrote to the commander-in-chief. "I sincerely hope," said he, "this is not intended to exclude the first lieut. of the *Culloden*. For heaven's sake, if it be so, get it altered. Our dear friend Trowbridge has endured enough. His sufferings were, in every respect, more than any of us." To the Admiralty he wrote in terms equally warm. "I hope, and believe, the word, engaged, is not intended to exclude the *Culloden*. The merit of that ship, and her gallant captain, are too well known to profit by any thing I could say. Her misfortune was great in getting aground, while her more fortunate companions were in the full tide of happiness. No; I am confident that my good Lord Spencer will never add misery to misfortune. Capt. Trowbridge on shore is superior to captains afloat: in the midst of his great misfortunes he made those signals which prevented certainly the *Alexander* and *Swiftsure* from running on the shoals. I beg your pardon for writing on a subject which, I verily believe, has never entered his lordship's head; but my heart, as it ought to be, is warm to my gallant friends." Thus feelingly alive was Nelson to the claims, and interests, and feelings of others. The Admiralty replied that the exception was necessary as the ship had not been in action: but they desired the commander-in-chief to promote the lieutenant upon the first vacancy that should occur.

Nelson, in remembrance of an old and uninterrupted friendship, appointed Alexander Davison sole prize agent for the captured ships: upon which Davison ordered medals to be struck in gold, for the captains; in silver for the lieutenants and warrant officers, in gilt metal for the petty officers; and in copper, for the seamen and marines. The cost of this act of liberality amounted nearly to £2000. It is worthy of record on another account; for some of the gallant men, who received no other honorary badge of their conduct than this copper medal, when they died upon a foreign station, made it their last request, that the medals might carefully be sent home to their respective friends.

Three of the frigates, whose presence would have been so essential a few weeks sooner, joined the squadron on the 12th day after action. The fourth joined a few days after them. Nelson thus received despatches which rendered it necessary for him to return to Naples. Before he left Egypt, he burned three of the prizes: they could not have been fitted for a passage to Gibraltar in less than a month, and that at a great expense, and with the loss to the service of at least two sail of the line. "I rest assured," he said to the Admiralty, "that they will be paid for, and have held out that assurance to the squadron. For if an admiral, after a victory, is to look after the captured ships, and not to the distressing of the enemy, very dearly, indeed, must the nation pay for the prizes. I trust that £60,000 will be deemed a very moderate sum for them: and when the services, time, and men, with the expense of fitting three ships for a voyage to England, are considered, government will save nearly as much as they are valued at." To Earl St. Vincent he said, "If he could have been sure that government would have paid a reasonable value for them, he would have ordered two of the other prizes to be burned: for they would cost more in refitting, and by the loss of ships attending them, than they were worth." Having sent the six prizes forward, under Sir James Saumarez, Nelson left Capt. Hood in the *Zealous*, off Alexandria, and stood out to sea himself on the 17th day after the battle.



## CHAPTER VI.

*Nelson returns to Naples—State of the Court and Kingdom—General Mack—The French approach Naples—Flight of the Royal Family—Successes of the Allies in Italy—Transactions in the Bay of Naples—Expulsion of the French from the Neapolitan and Roman States—Nelson is made Duke of Bronte—He leaves the Mediterranean and returns to Europe.*

NELSON'S health had suffered greatly while he was in the Agamemnon. "My complaint," he said, "is as if a girth were buckled taut over my breast; and my endeavour in the night is to get it loose." After the battle of Cape St. Vincent, he felt a little rest to be so essential to his recovery, that he declared he would not continue to serve longer than the ensuing summer, unless it should be absolutely necessary: for, in his own strong language, he had then been four years and nine months without one moment's repose for body or mind. A few months' intermission of labor he had obtained—not of rest, for it was purchased with the loss of a limb; and the greater part of the time had been a season of constant pain. As soon as his shattered frame had sufficiently recovered to resume his duties, he was called to services of greater importance than any on which he had hitherto been employed. The anxiety which he endured during his long pursuit of the enemy was rather changed in its direction, than abated by their defeat: and this constant wakefulness of thought, added to the effects of his wound, and his ardent exertions, nearly proved fatal. On his way back to Italy he was seized with fever. For eighteen hours his life was despaired of; and even when the disorder took a favorable turn, and he was so far recovered as to again appear on deck, he himself thought that his end was approaching. Writing to Earl St. Vincent, he said, "I never expect, my dear lord, to see your face again. It may please God that this will be the finish of that fever of anxiety which I have endured from the middle of June: but be that as it pleases his goodness. I am resigned to his will."

The kindest attentions of the warmest friendship were awaiting him at Naples. "Come here," said Sir William Hamilton, "for God's sake, my dear friend, as soon as the service will permit you. A pleasant apartment is ready for you in my house, and Emma is looking out for the softest pillows to repose the few wearied limbs you have left." Happy would it have been for Nelson if warm and careful friendship had been all that awaited him there! He himself saw at that time the character of the Neapolitan court, as it first struck an Englishman: and when on the way, he declared that he detested the voyage to Naples, and that nothing but necessity could have forced him to it. Before the battle of Aboukir, the court of Naples had been trembling for its existence. The language which the directory held towards it was well described by Sir William Hamilton, as being exactly the language of a highwayman. The joy, therefore, of the court at Nelson's success, was in proportion to the dismay from which that success relieved them. The queen was a daughter of Maria Theresa, and sister of Marie Antoinette. Her feelings, naturally ardent, and little accustomed to restraint, were excited to the highest pitch when the news of the



victory arrived. Lady Hamilton, her constant friend and favourite, who was present, says, "It is not possible to describe her transports: she wept, she kissed her husband, her children—walked frantically about the room, burst into tears again, and again kissed and embraced every person near her; exclaiming, "O brave Nelson! O God! bless and protect our brave deliverer! O Nelson! Nelson! what do we not owe you! O conqueror—saviour of Italy! O that my swollen heart could now tell him personally what we owe to him." She herself wrote to the Neapolitan ambassador at London upon the occasion, in terms which show the fullness of her joy, and the height of the hopes which it had excited. "I wish I could give him wings," said she, "to the bearer of the news, and, at the same time, to our most sincere gratitude. The whole of the seacoast of Italy is saved; and this is owing alone to the generous English. This total defeat of the regicide squadron, was obtained by the valour of this brave admiral, seconded by a navy which is the terror of his enemies. The victory is so complete, that I can still scarcely believe it: and if it were not the brave English nation, which is accustomed to perform prodigies at sea, I could not persuade myself that it had happened. It would have moved you to have seen all my children, boys and girls, hanging on my neck, and crying for joy at the happy news. Recommend the hero to his master: he has filled the whole of Italy with admiration of the English. Great hopes were entertained of some advantages being gained by his bravery, but no one could look for so total a destruction. All here are drunk with joy."

Such being the feelings of the royal family, it may well be supposed with what delight, and what honours Nelson would be welcomed. Early on the 22<sup>d</sup> of September, the poor wretched Vanguard, as he called his shattered vessel, appeared in sight of Naples. The Culloden and Alexander had preceded her some days, and given notice of her approach. Many hundred boats and barges were ready to go forth and meet him with music and streamers, and every demonstration of joy and triumph. Sir William and Lady Hamilton led the way in their state-barge. Emma Lady Hamilton was a woman whose personal accomplishments have seldom been equalled, and whose powers of mind were not less fascinating than her person. She was passionately attached to the queen: and by her influence the British fleet had obtained those supplies at Syracuse, without which, Nelson always asserted, the battle of Aboukir could not have been fought. During the long interval which passed before any tidings were received, her anxiety had been hardly less than that of Nelson himself, while pursuing an enemy of whom he could obtain no information: and when the tidings were brought her by a joyful bearer, open-mouthed, its effect was such, that she fell like one who had been shot. She and Sir William had literally been made ill by their hopes and fears, and joy at a catastrophe so far exceeding all that they had dared to hope for. Their admiration for the hero necessarily produced a proportionate degree of gratitude and affection; and when their barge came alongside the Vanguard, at the sight of Nelson, Lady Hamilton sprang up the ship's side, and exclaiming, "O God! is it possible!" fell into his arms, more, he says, like one dead than alive. He described the meeting as "terribly affecting." These friends had scarcely recovered



from their tears, when the king, who went out to meet him three leagues in the royal barge, came on board and took him by the hand, calling him his deliverer and preserver; from all the boats around he was saluted with the same appellations; the multitude who surrounded him when landed, repeated the same enthusiastic cries; and the lazzaroni displayed their joy by holding up birds in cages, and giving them their liberty as he passed.

His birth-day, which occurred a week after his arrival, was celebrated with one of the most splendid fetes ever beheld at Naples. But, notwithstanding the splendour with which he was encircled, and the flattering honours with which all ranks welcomed him, Nelson was fully sensible of the depravity, as well as weakness, of those by whom he was surrounded. "What precious moments," said he, "the courts of Naples and Vienna are losing! Three months would liberate Italy! but this court is so enervated, that the happy moment will be lost. I am very unwell; and their miserable conduct is not likely to cool my irritable temper. It is a country of fiddlers and poets, whores and scoundrels." This sense of their ruinous weakness he always retained; nor was he ever blind to the mingled folly and treachery of the Neapolitan ministers, and the complicated iniquities under which the country groaned: but he insensibly, under the influence of Lady Hamilton, formed an affection for the court, to whose misgovernment the miserable condition of the country was so greatly to be imputed. By the kindness of her nature, as well as by her attractions, she had won his heart. Earl St. Vincent, writing to her at the time, says, "Ten thousand most grateful thanks are due to your ladyship for restoring the health of our invaluable friend Nelson, on whose life the fate of the remaining governments in Europe, whose system has not been deranged by these devils, depends. Pray do not let your fascinating Neapolitan dames approach too near him, for he is made of flesh and blood, and cannot resist their temptations." But this was addressed to the very person from whom he was in danger.

No circumstances could be more unfavourable to the best interests of Europe, than those which placed Edgland in strict alliance with the superannuated and abominable governments of the continent. The subjects of those governments who wished for freedom thus became enemies to England, and dupes and agents to France. They looked to their own grinding grievances, and did not see the danger with which the liberties of the world were threatened: England, on the other hand, saw the danger in its true magnitude, but was blind to these grievances, and found herself compelled to support systems which had formerly been equally the objects of her abhorrence and her contempt. This was the state of Nelson's mind: he knew that there could be no peace for Europe till the pride of France was humbled, and her strength broken; and he regarded all those who were the friends of France, as traitors to the common cause, as well as to their own individual sovereigns. The court of Naples, unconscious of committing any crime by continuing the system of misrule to which he had succeeded, con-



ceived that, in maintaining things as they were, they were maintaining their own rights, and preserving the people from such horrors as had been perpetrated in France. The Neapolitan revolutionists thought, that without a total change of system, any relief from the present evils was impossible, and they believed themselves justified in bringing about that change by any means. Both parties knew that it was the fixed intention of the French to revolutionize Naples. The revolutionists supposed that it was for the purpose of establishing a free government: the court, and all disinterested persons, were perfectly aware that the enemy had no other object than conquest and plunder.

The battle of the Nile shook the power of France. Her most successful general and her finest army were blocked up in Egypt, hopeless, as it appeared, of return; and the government was in the hands of men without talents, without character, and divided among themselves. Austria, whom Buonaparte had terrified into a peace, at a time when constancy on her part would probably have led to his destruction, took advantage of the crisis to renew the war. Russia, also, was preparing to enter the field with unbroken forces; led by a general, whose extraordinary military genius would have entitled him to a high and honorable rank in history, if it had not been sullied by all the ferocity of a barbarian. Naples, seeing its destruction at hand, and thinking that the only means of averting it was by meeting the danger, after long vacillations, which were produced by the fears and weakness and treachery of its council, agreed at last to join this new coalition with a numerical force of eighty thousand men. Nelson told the king, in plain terms, that he had his choice, either to advance, trusting to God for his blessing on a just cause, and prepared to die, sword in hand,—or to remain quiet and be kicked out of his kingdom:—one of these things must happen. The king made answer, he would go on, and trust in God and Nelson; and Nelson, who would else have returned to Egypt, for the purpose of destroying the French shipping in Alexandria, gave up his intention at the desire of the Neapolitan court, and resolved to remain on that station, in the hope that he might be useful to the movements of the army. He suspected also, with reason, that the continuance of the fleet was so earnestly requested, because the royal family thought their persons would be safer in case of any mishap, under the British flag, than under their own.

His first object was the recovery of Malta, an island which the king of Naples pretended to claim. The Maltese, whom the villainous knights of their order had betrayed to France, had taken up arms against their rapacious invaders, with a spirit and unanimity worthy the highest praise. They blockaded the French Garrison by land, and a small squadron under Capt. Ball, began to blockade them by sea, on the 12th of October. Twelve days afterward, Nelson arrived; “It is as I suspected,” he says: “the ministers at Naples know nothing of the situation of the island. Not a house or bastion of the town is in possession of the islanders: and the Marquis de Niza tells us, they want arms, victuals, and support. He does not know that any Neapolitan officers



are in the island; perhaps, although I have their names, none are arrived; and it is very certain, by the marquis's account, that no supplies have been sent by the governors' of Syracuse and Messina." The little island of Gozo, dependent upon Malta, which had also been seized and garrisoned by the French, capitulated soon after his arrival, and was taken possession of by the British, in the name of his Sicilian majesty,—a power who had no better claim to it than France. Having seen this effected, and reinforced Capt. Ball, he left that able officer to perform a most arduous and important part, and returned himself to co-operate with the intended movements of the Neapolitans.

General Mack was at the head of the Neapolitan troops:—all that is now doubtful concerning this man is, whether he was a coward or a traitor:—at that time he was assiduously extolled as a most consummate commander, to whom Europe might look for deliverance: and when he was introduced by the king and queen to the British admiral, the queen said to him, "Be to us by land, general, what my hero Nelson has been by sea." Mack, on his part, did not fail to praise the force which he was appointed to command: "It was," he said, "the finest army in Europe." Nelson agreed with him, that there could be no finer men: but when the general, at a review, so directed the operations of a mock-fight, that, by an unhappy blunder, his own troops were surrounded by those of the enemy, he turned to his friends, and exclaimed, with bitterness, that the fellow did not understand his business. Another circumstance, not less characteristic, confirmed Nelson in his judgment. "General Mack," said he, in one of his letters, "cannot move without five carriages! I have formed my opinion. I heartily pray I may be mistaken."

While Mack, at the head of 32,000 men, marched into the Roman state, 5000 Neapolitans were embarked on board the British and Portuguese squadron, to take possession of Leghorn. This was effected without opposition; and the grand duke of Tuscany, whose neutrality had been so outrageously violated by the French, was better satisfied with the measure than some of the Neapolitans themselves. Naselli, their general, refused to seize the French vessels at Leghorn, because he, and the Duke di Sangro, who was ambassador at the Tuscan court, maintained, that the king of Naples was not at war with France. "What!" said Nelson, "has not the king received, as a conquest made by him, the republican flag taken at Gozo? Is not his own flag flying there, and at Malta, not only by his permission, but by his order? Is not his flag shot at every day by the French, and their shot returned from batteries which bear that flag? Are not two frigates and a corvette placed under my orders ready to fight the French, meet them where they may? Has not the king sent publicly, from Naples, guns, mortars, &c. with officers and artillery against the French in Malta? If these acts are not tantamount to any written paper, I give up all knowledge of what is war." This reasoning was of less avail than argument addressed to the general's fears. Nelson told him, that if he permitted the many hundred French, who were then in the mole, to re-



main neutral, till they had a fair opportunity of being active, they had one sure resource, if all other schemes failed, which was to set one vessel on fire; the mole would be destroyed, probably the town also; and the port ruined for twenty years. This representation made Naselli agree to the half measure of laying an embargo on the vessels: among them were a great number of French privateers, some of which were of such force as to threaten the greatest mischief to our commerce; and about 70 sail of vessels belonging to the Laguirian republic, as Genoa was now called, laden with corn, and ready to sail for Genoa and France; where their arrival would have expedited the entrance of more French troops into Italy. "The general," said Nelson, "saw, I believe, the consequence of letting the vessels depart, in the same light as myself; but there is this difference between us—he prudently, and certainly safely, waits the orders of his court, taking no responsibility upon himself; I act from the circumstances of the moment, as I feel may be most advantageous for the cause which I serve, taking all responsibility on myself." It was in vain to hope for any thing vigorous or manly from such men as Nelson was compelled to act with. The crews of the French ships and their allies were ordered to depart in two days. Four elapsed, and nobody obeyed the order; nor, in spite of the representations of the British minister, Mr. Wyndham, were any means taken to enforce it:—the true Neapolitan shuffle, as Nelson called it, took place on all occasions. After an absence of ten days, he returned to Naples: and receiving intelligence there, from Mr. Windham, that that the privateers were at last to be disarmed, the corn landed, and the crews sent away, he expressed his satisfaction at the news in characteristic language, saying, "So far I am content. The enemy will be distressed; and, thank God, I shall get no money. The world, I know, think that money is our god; and now they will be undeceived as far as relates to us. Down, down with the French! is my constant prayer."

Odes, sonnets, and congratulatory poems of every description were poured in upon Nelson, on his arrival at Naples. An Irish Franciscan, who was one of the poets, not being content with panegyric upon this occasion, ventured upon a flight of prophecy, and predicted that Lord Nelson would take Rome with his ships. His Lordship reminded Father M'Cormick, that ships could not ascend the Tiber; but the father, who had probably forgotten this circumstance, met the objection with a bold front, and he declared he saw it would come to pass notwithstanding. Rejoicings of this kind were of short duration. The king of Naples was with the army which had entered Rome; but the castle of St. Angelo was held by the French, and thirteen thousand French were strongly posted in the Roman States at Castellana. Mack had marched against them with twenty thousand men. Nelson saw that the event was doubtful; or rather that there could be very little hope of the result. But the immediate fate of Naples as he knew, hung upon the issue. "If Mack is defeated," said he, in fourteen days this country is lost; for the Emperor has not yet moved his army, and Naples has not the power of resisting the enemy. It was not a case for choice, but of necessity, which induced the king to march out of his kingdom, and not to wait till the French had collected a



force sufficient to drive him out in a week." He had no reliance upon the Neapolitan officers ; who, as he described them, seemed frightened at a drawn sword or a loaded gun ; and he was perfectly aware of the consequences which the sluggish movements and deceitful policy of the Austrians were likely to bring down upon themselves and all their continental allies. " A delayed war on the part of the Emperor," said he, writing to the British minister at Vienna, " will be destructive to this monarchy of Naples ; and, of course, to the newly-acquired dominions of the emperor of Italy. Had the war commenced in September or October, all Italy would, at this moment have been liberated. This month is worse than the last : the next will render the contest doubtful ; and, in six months, when the Neapolitan republick will be organized, armed, and with its numerous resources called forth, the emperor will not only be defeated in Italy, but will totter on his throne at Vienna. *Down, down with the French !* ought to be written in the council room of every country in the world : and may Almighty God give right thoughts to every sovereign, is my constant prayer !" His perfect foresight of the immediate event was clearly shown in his letter, when he desired the Ambassador to assure the empress (who was a daughter of the house of Naples), that notwithstanding the councils which had shaken the throne of her father and mother, he would remain there, ready to save their persons, and her brothers and sisters ; and that he had also left ships at Leghorn, to save the lives of the grand duke and her sister : " For all," said he, " must be a republic, if the emperor does not act with expedition and vigour."

His fears were soon verified. " The Neapolitan officers," said Nelson, " did not loose much honour, for, God knows, they had not much to loose : but they lost all they had." General St. Philip commanded the right wing, of nineteen thousand men. He fell in with three thousand of the enemy ; and, as soon as he came near enough, deserted to them. One of his men had virtue enough to level a musket at him, and shot him through the arm ; but the wound was not sufficient to prevent him from joining with the French in pursuit of his own countrymen. Cannon, tents, and baggage, and military chest were all forsaken by the runaways, though they lost only 40 men : for the French, having put them to flight, and got possession of every thing, did not pursue an army of more than three times their own number. The main body of the Neapolitans, under Mack, did not behave better. The king returned to Naples, where every day brought with it the tidings of some new disgrace from the army, and the discovery of some new treachery at home ; till, four days after his return, the general sent him advice, that there was no prospect of stopping the progress of the enemy, and that the royal family must look to their own personal safety. The state of the public mind at Naples was such that neither the British minister nor the British admiral thought it prudent to appear at court. Their motions were watched ; and the revolutionists had even formed a plan for seizing and detaining them as hostages to prevent any attack on the city after the French should have taken possession of it. A letter, which Nelson addressed at this time to the first lord of the Admiralty, shows in what manner he contemplated the possible issue of the storm. It was in these words :—" My dear lord, there is an old saying, that when things are at the worst they must mend :—now, the mind of man cannot fancy things worse than they are here. But, thank God !



my health is better, my mind never firmer, and my heart in the right trim to comfort, relieve and protect those whom it is my duty to afford assistance. Pray, my Lord, assure our gracious sovereign, that while I live, I will support his glory; and that if I fall, it shall in a manner be worthy of your Lordship's faithful and obliged Nelson. I must not write more. Every word may be a text for a long letter."

Meantime, Lady Hamilton arranged every thing for the removal of the royal family. This was conducted, on her part, with the greatest address, and without suspicion, because she had been in habits of constant correspondence with the queen. It was known that the removal could not be effected without danger; for the mob, and especially the lazaroni, were attached to the king, and as, at this time, they felt a natural presumption on their numbers and strength, they insisted that he should not leave Naples. Several persons fell victims to their fury: among others was a messenger from Vienna, whose body was drawn under the windows of the palace in the king's sight. The king and queen spoke to the mob, and pacified them; but it would not have been safe, while they were in this agitated state, to embark the effects of the royal family openly. Lady Hamilton, like a heroine of modern romance, explored, with no little danger, a subterraneous passage, leading from the palace to the seaside: through this passage, the royal treasures, the choicest pieces of painting and sculpture, and other property to the amount of two millions and a half, were conveyed to the shore, and stowed safely on board the English ships. On the night of the 21st, at half past eight, Nelson landed, brought out the whole royal family, embarked them in three barges, and carried them safely, through a tremendous sea, to the Vanguard. Notice was then immediately given to the British merchants, that they would be received on board any ship in the squadron. Their property had been previously embarked in transports. Two days were passed in the bay, for the purpose of taking such persons on board as required an asylum; and, on the night of the 23d, the fleet sailed. The next day a more violent storm arose than Nelson had ever before encountered. On the 25th, the youngest of the princes was taken ill, and died in Lady Hamilton's arms. During this whole trying season, Lady Hamilton waited upon the royal family with the zeal of the most devoted servant, at a time when, except one man, no person belonging to the court assisted them.

On the morning of the 26th, the royal family were landed at Palermo. It was soon seen that their flight had not been premature. Prince Pignatelli, who had been left as vice-general and viceroy, with orders to defend the kingdom to the last rock in Calabria, sent plenipotentiaries to the French camp before Capua; and they, for the sake of saving the capital, signed an armistice, by which the greater part of the kingdom was given up to the enemy: a cession that necessarily led to the loss of the whole. This was the 10th of January. The French advanced towards Naples. Mack, under pretence of taking shelter from the fury of the lazzaroni, fled to the French general Championnet, who sent him under an escort to Milan: but, as France hoped for further services from this wretched traitor, it was thought prudent to treat him appa-



rently as a prisoner of war. The Neapolitan army disappeared in a few days: of the men, some following their officers, deserted to the enemy: the greater part took the opportunity of disbanding themselves. The lazzroni proved true to their country: they attacked the enemy's advanced posts, drove them in, and were not dispirited by the murderous defeat which they suffered from the main body. Flying into the city, they continued to defend it, even after the French had planted their artillery in the principal streets. The priests affirmed, that St. Januarius had declared in favour of the revolution. The miracle of his blood was performed with the usual success, and more than usual effect, on the very evening when, after two days of desperate fighting, the French obtained possession of Naples. A French guard of honour was stationed at his church. Championet gave "Respect for St. Januarius!" as the word for the army; and the next day *Te Deum* was sung by the archbishop in the cathedral; and the inhabitants were invited to attend the ceremony, and join in thanksgiving for the glorious entry of the French; who, it was said, being under the peculiar protection of Providence, had regenerated the Neapolitans, and were come to establish and consolidate their happiness.

It seems to have been Nelson's opinion, that the Austrian cabinet regarded the conquest of Naples with complacency, and that its measures were directed so as designedly not to prevent the French from overrunning it. That cabinet was assuredly capable of any folly and of any baseness: and it is not improbable that, at this time, calculating upon the success of the new coalition, it indulged a dream of adding extensively to its former Italian possessions; and, therefore, it left the few remaining powers of Italy to be overthrown, as a means which would facilitate its own ambitious views. The king of Sardinia finding it impossible longer to endure the exactions of France, and the insults of the French commissary, went to Leghorn, embarked on board a Danish frigate, and sailed under British protection to Sardinia—that part of his dominions, which the maritime supremacy of England rendered a safe asylum. On his arrival, he published a protest against the conduct of France; declaring, upon the faith and word of a king, that he had never infringed the treaties which he had made with the French republic. Tuscany was soon occupied by French troops. Nelson began to fear even for Sicily. "Oh, my dear sir, said he, writing to Commodore Duckworth, "one thousand English troops would save Messina,—and I fear General Stuart cannot give me men to save this most important island!" But his representations were not lost upon Sir Charles Stuart: this officer hastened immediately from Minorca, with 1000 men, assisted in the measures of defence which were taken, and did not return before he had satisfied himself, that if the Neapolitans were excluded from the management of affairs, and the spirit of the peasantry properly directed, Sicily was safe. Before his coming, Nelson had offered the king, if no resources should arrive, to defend Messina with the ship's company of an English man-of-war.



Russia had now entered the war. Corfu surrendered to a Russian and Turkish fleet, acting now, for the first time, in strange confederacy: yet against a power which was certainly the common and greatest enemy of both. Trowbridge, having given up the blockade of Alexandria to Sir Sidney Smith, joined Nelson, bringing with him a considerable addition of strength; and in himself, what Nelson valued more, a man upon whose sagacity, indefatigable zeal, and inexhaustible resources, he could place full reliance. Trowbridge was intrusted to commence operations against the French in the bay of Naples:—meantime, Cardinal Ruffo, a man of questionable character, but of a temper fitted for such times, had landed at Calabria, raised what was called a Christian army, composed of the best and the vilest materials; loyal peasants, enthusiastic priests and friars, galley slaves, the emptying of the jails, and banditti. The islands in the bay of Naples were joyfully delivered by the inhabitants, who were in a state of famine already, from the effect of this baleful revolution. Trowbridge distributed among them all his flour; and Nelson pressed the Sicilian court incessantly for supplies; telling them that £10,000 given away in provisions, would, at this time purchase a kingdom. Money, he was told, they had not to give; and the wisdom and integrity which might have supplied its want, were not to be found. “There is nothing,” said he, “which I propose, that is not, as far as orders go, implicitly complied with: but the execution is dreadful, and almost makes me mad. My desire to serve their majesties faithfully, as is my duty, has been such, that I am almost blind and worn out; and cannot, in my present state, hold much longer.”

Nelson's heart too was at this time ashore. “To tell you,” he says, writing to Lady Hamilton, “how dreary and uncomfortable the Vanguard appears, is only telling you what it is to go from the pleasantest society to a solitary cell; or from the dearest friends to no friends. I am now perfectly the great man,—not a creature near me. From my heart I wish myself the little man again. You and good Sir William have spoiled me for any place, but with you.”

His mind was not in a happier state respecting public affairs. “As to politics,” said he, “at this time they are my abomination: the ministers of kings and princes are as great scoundrels as ever lived. The brother of the emperor is just going to marry the great Something of Russia, and it is to be more than expected that a kingdom is to be found for him in Italy, and that the kingdom of Naples will be sacrificed.” Had there been a wise and manly spirit in the Italian States, or had the conduct of Austria been directed by any thing like a principle of honour, a more favourable opportunity could not have been desired for restoring order and prosperity in Europe than the misconduct of the French directory at this time afforded. But Nelson saw selfishness and knavery wherever he looked; and even the pleasure of seeing a cause prosper, in which he was so zealously engaged, was poisoned by his sense of the rascality of those with whom he was compelled to act. At this juncture intelligence arrived that the French fleet had escaped



from Brest, under cover of a fog, passed Cadiz unseen by Lord Keith's squadron, in hazy weather, and entered the Mediterranean. It was said to consist of twenty-four sail of the line, six frigates and three sloops. The object of the French was to liberate the Spanish fleet, form a junction with them against Minorca and Sicily, and overpower our naval force in the Mediterranean, by falling in with detached squadrons, and thus destroying it in detail. When they arrived off Carthage-na, they requested the Spanish to make sail and join; but the Spaniards replied, they had not men to man them. To this it was answered, that the French had men enough on board for that purpose. But the Spaniards seems to have been apprehensive of delivering up their ships thus entirely into the power of such allies, and refused to come out. The fleet from Cadiz, however, consisting of from seventeen to twenty sail of the line, got out, under Masaredo, a man who then bore an honourable name, which he has since rendered infamous by betraying his country. They met with a violent storm off the coast of Oran, which dismasted many of their ships, and so effectually disabled them as to prevent the junction, and frustrate a well-planned expedition.

Before this occurred, and while the junction was as probable as it would have been formidable, Nelson was in a state of the greatest anxiety. "What a state am I in!" said he to Earl St. Vincent. "If I go, I risk, and more than risk Sicily: for we know, from experience, that more depends upon opinion than upon acts themselves: and as I stay, my heart is breaking." His first business was to summon Trowbridge to join him, with all the ships of the line under his command, and a frigate, if possible. Then hearing that the French had entered the Mediterranean, and expecting them at Palermo, where he had only his own ship;—with that single ship he prepared to make all the resistance possible. Trowbridge having joined him, he left Captain E. J. Foote, of the Seahorse, to command the smaller vessels in the Bay of Naples, and sailed with six ships; one a Portuguese, and a Portuguese corvette; telling Earl St. Vincent that the squadron should never fall into the hands of the enemy: "And before we are destroyed," said he, "I have little doubt but they will have their wings so completely clipped, that they may be easily overtaken." It was just at this time that he received from Capt. Hallowell the present of the coffin. Such a present was regarded by the men with natural astonishment: one of his old shipmates in the Agamemnon said—"We shall have hot work of it indeed! You see the admiral intends to fight until he is killed; and there he is to be buried." Nelson placed it upright against the bulkhead of his cabin, behind his chair, where he sat at dinner. The gift suited him at this time. It is said he was disappointed in the son-in-law, whom he had loved so dearly from his childhood, and who had saved his life at Teneriffe: and it is certain that he had formed an infatuated attachment for Lady Hamilton, which totally weaned his affections from his wife. Farther than this, there is no reason to believe that this unfortunate attachment was criminal: but this was criminality enough, and it brought with it its punishment. Nelson was dissatisfied with



himself ; and, therefore, weary of the world. This feeling he frequently expressed. "There is no true happiness in this life," said he, "and in my present state, I could quit it with a smile." And in a letter to his old friend Davison, he said : "Believe me, my only wish is to sink with honor into the grave ; and when that shall please God, I shall meet death with a smile. Not that I am insensible to the honours and riches my king and country have heaped upon me,—so much more than any officer could deserve ; yet I am ready to quit this world of trouble, and envy none but those of the estate six feet by two."

Well had it been for Nelson if he had made no other sacrifices to this unhappy attachment than his peace of mind ; but it led to the only blot in his public character. While he sailed from Palermo, with the intention of collecting his whole force, and keeping off Maretimo, either to receive reinforcements there, if the French were bound upwards, or to hasten to Minorca, if that should be their destination ; Capt. Foote, in the *Seahorse*, with the Neapolitan frigates, and some small vessels under his command, was left to act with a land force of a few regular troops, of four different nations, and with the armed rabble which Cardinal Ruffo called the Christian army. His directions were to co-operate to the utmost of his power with the royalists, at whose head Ruffo had been placed, and he had no instructions whatever. Ruffo advancing, without any plan, but relying upon the enemy's want of numbers, which prevented them to act upon the offensive, and ready to take advantage of any accident which might occur, approached Naples. Fort St. Elmo, which commands the town, was wholly garrisoned by the French troops ; the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, which commanded the anchorage, were chiefly defended by Neapolitan revolutionists, the powerful men among them having taken shelter there. If these castles were taken, the reduction of Fort St. Elmo would be greatly expedited. They were strong places, and there was reason to apprehend that the French fleet might arrive to relieve them. Ruffo proposed to the garrison to capitulate, on condition that their persons and property should be guaranteed, and that they should, at their own option, either be sent to Toulon, or remain at Naples, without either being molested either in their persons or families. This capitulation was accepted : it was signed by the Cardinal, and the Russian and Turkish Commanders ; and, lastly, by Capt. Foote, as commander of the British force. About six-and-thirty hours afterward, Nelson arrived in the bay, with a force which had joined him during his cruise, consisting of seventeen sail of the line, with seventeen hundred troops on board, and the *Prince Royal* of Naples in the admiral's ship. A flag of truce was flying on the castles, and on board the *Seahorse*. Nelson made a signal to annul the treaty ; declaring that he would grant rebels no other terms than those of unconditional submission. The Cardinal objected to this : nor could all the arguments of Nelson, Sir W. Hamilton, and Lady Hamilton who took an active part in the conference, convince him that a treaty of such a nature, solemnly concluded, could honourably be set aside. He retired at last, silenced by Nelson's authority, but not convinced.



Capt. Foote was sent out of the bay; and the garrisons, taken out of the castles, under pretence of carrying the treaty into effect, were delivered over as rebels to the vengeance of the Sicilian court. A deplorable transaction! a stain upon the memory of Nelson, and the honour of England! To palliate it would be in vain; to justify it would be wicked: there is no alternative, for one who will not make himself a principal in the guilt, but to record the disgraceful story with sorrow and with shame.

Prince Francesco Caraccioli, a younger branch of one of the noblest Neapolitan families, escaped from one of these castles before it capitulated. He was at the head of the marine, and was 70 years of age, bearing a high character. He had accompanied the court to Sicily; but when the revolutionary government issued an edict, ordering all Neapolitans to return on pain of confiscation of their property, he solicited and obtained permission of the king to return. The king, when he granted him this permission, warned him not to take any part in politics. But the king ought not to have imagined that a man of such reputation would be permitted to remain inactive; and Caraccioli was soon again in command of the navy, and serving under the republic. When the recovery of Naples was evidently near, he applied to Cardinal Ruffo for protection; expressing his hope, that the few days during which he had been forced to obey the French, would not outweigh 40 years of faithful service; but knowing too well the temper of the Sicilian court, he endeavoured to secrete himself, and a price was set upon his head. More unfortunate for others than for himself, he was brought in alive, having been discovered in the disguise of a peasant, and carried one morning on board Lord Nelson's ship. Caraccioli was well known to the British officers, and had been ever highly esteemed. Capt. Hardy ordered him to be unbound, and to be treated with all those attentions which he felt due to a man who, when last on board the *Foudroyant*, had been received as an admiral and a prince. Sir William and Lady Hamilton were in the ship; but Nelson saw no one except his officers during the tragedy that ensued.—He issued an order to the Neapolitan commodore to assemble a court-martial of Neapolitan officers, on board the British flag-ship, proceed immediately to try the prisoner, and report to him, if the charges were proved, what punishment he ought to suffer. These proceedings were as rapid as possible; Caraccioli was brought on board, and the trial began. It lasted 2 hours: he averred in his defence, that he had acted under compulsion, having been compelled to serve as a common soldier till he consented to take command of the fleet. This he failed in proving. He was found guilty, and sentenced to death; and Nelson gave orders that the sentence should be carried into effect that evening, by hanging him at the fore yard-arm; when the body was to be cut down, and thrown into the sea. Caraccioli requested Lieut. Parkinson, under whose custody he was placed, to intercede with Lord Nelson for a second trial,—for this, among other reasons, that Count Thurn, who presided at the court-martial, was notoriously his personal enemy. Nelson made answer, that the prisoner had been fairly tried by the officers of his own country, and he could not interfere: forgetting that, if he felt himself justified in ordering the trial and the execution, no human being could ever have questioned the propri-



ety of his interfering on the side of mercy. Caraccioli then entreated that he might be shot.—“I am an old man, sir,” said he: “I leave no family to lament me, and therefore cannot be supposed to be very anxious about prolonging my life; but the disgrace of being hanged is dreadful to me.” When this was repeated to Nelson, he only told the Lieut. with much agitation, to go and attend his duty. As a last hope, Caraccioli asked the Lieut. if he thought an application to Lady Hamilton would be beneficial? Parkinson went to seek her: she was not to be seen on this occasion—but she was present at the execution.—She had a most devoted attachment to the Neapolitan court; and the hatred which she felt against those whom she regarded as its enemies made her, at this time, forget what was due to the character of her sex, as well as of her country. Doubtless, the British admiral seemed to himself to be acting under a rigid sense of justice; but, to others, it was obvious, that he was influenced by an infatuated attachment.

The body was carried to a considerable distance, and sunk in the bay, with three double-headed shot, weighing 250 lbs. tied to its legs. Between two and three weeks afterward, when the king was on board the *Foudroyant*, a Neapolitan fisherman came to the ship, and solemnly declared, that Caraccioli had risen from the bottom of the sea, and was coming to Naples, swimming half out of the water. Such an account was listened to like a tale of idle credulity. Nelson, to please the king, stood out to sea; but the ship had not proceeded far before a body was distinctly seen, upright in the water, and approaching them. It was soon recognised to be the corpse of Caraccioli, which had risen, and floated, while the great weights attached to the legs kept the body in a position like that of a living man. A fact so extraordinary astonished the king, and perhaps excited some feelings of superstitious fear, akin to regret. He gave permission for the body to be taken on shore, and receive Christian burial. It produced no better effect.

The castles of St. Elmo, Gaïeta, and Capua, remained to be subdued. On the land side, there was no danger that the French in these garrisons should be relieved, for Suverof was now beginning to drive the enemy before him; but Nelson thought his presence necessary in the bay of Naples: and when Lord Keith having received intelligence that the French and Spanish fleets had formed a junction, and sailed for Cathagena, ordered him to repair to Minorca, with the whole or the greater part of his force, he sent Admiral Duckworth with a small part only. This was a dilemma which he had foreseen. “Should such an order come at this moment,” he said, in a letter previously written to the Admiralty, “it would be a case for some consideration, whether Minorca is to be risked, or the two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily; I rather think my decision would be to risk the former.” And, after he had acted upon his opinion, he wrote in these terms to the Duke of Clarence, with whose high notions of obedience he was well acquainted: “I am well aware of the consequences of disobeying my orders: but as I have often before risked my life for the good cause, so I with cheerfulness did my commission; for, although a military tribunal may think me criminal, the world will approve of my conduct: and I regard not my own safety, when the honour of my king is at stake.”

Nelson was right in his judgment: no attempt was made upon Minorca; and the expulsion of the French from Naples may rather



he said to have been effected, than accelerated, by the English and Portuguese of the allied fleet, acting upon shore, under Trowbridge.—The French commandant at St. Elmo, relying upon the strength of the place, and the nature of the force which attacked it, had insulted Capt. Foote, in the grossest terms; but *citoyen* Mejan was soon taught better manners, when Trowbridge, in spite of every obstacle, opened five batteries upon the fort. He was informed, that none of his letters with the insolent printed words at the top, *Liberte, Egalite, Guerre aux Tyrans, &c.* would be received; but that, if he wrote like a soldier and a gentleman, he should be answered in the same style. The Frenchman then began to flatter his antagonist upon the *bienfaisance* and *humanite*, which, he said, were the least of the many virtues which distinguished Monsieur Trowbridge.} Monsieur Trowbridge's *bienfaisance* was, at this time, thinking of mining the fort.—“If we can accomplish that,” said he, “I am a strong advocate to send them, hostages and all, to Old Nick, and surprise him with a group of nobility and republicans. Meantime,” he added, “it was some satisfaction to perceive that the shells fell well, and broke some of their shins.”—Finally, to complete his character, Mejan offered to surrender for 150,000 ducats. Great Britain, perhaps, has made but too little use of this kind of artillery, which France has found so effectual towards subjugating the continent: but Trowbridge had the prey within his reach; and in the course of a few days, his last battery, “after much trouble and palaver,” as he said, “brought the vagabonds to their senses.”

Trowbridge had more difficulties to overcome in this siege, from the character of the Neapolitans who pretended to assist him, and whom he made useful, than even from the strength of the place and the skill of the French. “Such damned cowards and villians,” he declared, “he had never seen before.” The men at the advanced posts carried on, what he called, “a diabolical good understanding” with the enemy, and the workmen would sometimes take fright and run away.—“I make the best I can,” said he, “of the degenerate race I have to deal with; the whole means of guns, ammunition, pioneers, &c. with all materials, rest with them. With fair promises to the men, and threats of instant death if I find any one erring, a little spur has been given.” Nelson said of him, with truth, upon this occasion, that he was a first-rate general. “I find, sir,” said he afterward, in a letter to the Duke of Clarence, “that General Koehler does not approve of such irregular proceedings as naval officers attacking and defending fortifications. We have but one idea,—to get close alongside. None but a sailor would have placed a battery only one hundred and eighty yards from the castle of St. Elmo: a soldier must have gone according to art, and the——way. My brave Trowbridge went straight on, for we had no time to spare.”

Trowbridge then proceeded to Capua, and took command of the motley besieging force. One thousand of the best men in the fleet were sent to assist in the siege. Just at this time Nelson received a peremptory order from Lord Keith, to sail with the whole of the force for the protection of Minorca; or, at least, to retain no more than was absolutely necessary for the protection of Sicily. “You will easily conceive my feelings,” said he, in communicating this to Earl St. Vincent: “but my mind, as your lordship knows, was perfectly prepared



for this order; and is now, more than ever, made up. At this moment I will not part with a single ship; as I cannot do that without drawing 120 men from each ship, now at the siege of Capua. I am fully aware of the act I have committed; but I am prepared for any fate which may await my disobedience. Capua and Gaieta will soon fall; and the moment the scoundrels of French are out of this kingdom, I shall send eight or nine ships of the line to Minorca. I have done what I thought right: others may think differently; but it will be my consolation that I have gained a kingdom, seated a faithful ally of his majesty firmly on his throne, and restored happiness to millions."

At Capua, Trowbridge had the same difficulties as at St. Elmo; and being farther from Naples, and from the fleet, was less able to overcome them. The powder was so bad that he suspected treachery; and when he asked Nelson to spare him forty casks from the ships, he told him it would be necessary that some Englishmen should accompany it, or they would steal one half, and change the other. Capua, however, soon fell; Gaieta immediately afterward surrendered to Capt. Louis of the *Minotaur*. Here the commanding officer acted more unlike a Frenchman, Capt. Louis said, than any one he had ever met; meaning that he had acted like a man of honour. He required, however, that the garrison should carry away their horses, and other pillaged property: to which Nelson replied, "That no property which they did not bring with them into the country could be theirs; and that the greatest care should be taken to prevent them from carrying it away."

The whole kingdom of Naples was thus delivered by Nelson from the French. The Admiralty, however, thought it expedient to censure him for disobeying Lord Keith's orders, and thus hazarding Minorca, without, as it appeared to them, any sufficient reason; and also from having landed seamen for the siege of Capua, to form part of an army employed in operations at a distance from the coast; where, in case of defeat, they might have been prevented from returning to their ships; and they enjoined him not to employ the seamen in like manner in future." When Nelson communicated the tidings of his complete success, he said, in his public letter, "that it would not be the less acceptable for having been principally brought about by British sailors." To the first lord, he said, at the same time, "I certainly, from having only a left hand, cannot enter into details which may explain the motives that actuated my conduct. My principle is, to assist in driving the French to the devil, and in restoring peace and happiness to mankind. I feel that I am fitter to do the work than to describe it." He then added, that he would take care of Minorca.

In expelling the French from Naples, Nelson had, with characteristic zeal and ability, discharged his duty; but he deceived himself when he imagined that he had seated Ferdinand firmly on his throne, and that he had restored happiness to millions. These objects might have been accomplished if it had been possible to inspire virtue and wisdom into a vicious and infatuated court; and if Nelson's eyes had not been, as it were, spell-bound, by that unhappy attachment which had now completely mastered him, he would have seen things as they were; and might, perhaps, have awakened the Sicilian court to a sense of their interest, if not of their duty. That court employed itself in a miserable



round of folly and festivity, while the prison of Naples were filled with groans, and the scaffolds streamed with blood. St. Januarius was solemnly removed from his rank as patron saint of the kingdom, having been convicted of Jacobinism; and St. Antonio as solemnly installed in his place. The king, instead of re-establishing order at Naples by his presence, speedily returned to Palermo, to indulge in his favourite amusements. Nelson, and the ambassador's family accompanied the court; and Trowbridge remained, groaning over the villainy and frivolity of those with whom he was compelled to deal. A party of officers applied to him for a passage to Palermo, to see the procession of St. Rosalia:—he recommended them to exercise their troops, and not behave like children. It was grief enough for him that the court should be busied in these follies, and Nelson involved in them. “I dread, my lord,” said he, “all the feasting, &c. at Palermo. I am sure your health will be hurt. If so, all their saints will be damned by the navy. The king would be better employed digesting a good government; every thing gives way to their pleasures. The money spent at Palermo gives discontent here: fifty thousand people are unemployed, trade discouraged, manufactures at a stand. It is the interest of many here to keep the king away;—they all dread reform:—their villainies are so deeply rooted, that, if some method is not taken to dig them out, this government cannot hold together. Out of twenty millions of ducats, collected as the revenue, only thirteen millions reach the treasury: and the king pays four ducats where he should pay one. He is surrounded by thieves; and none of them have honour or honesty enough to tell him the real and true state of things.” In another letter he expressed his sense of the miserable state of Naples. “There are upwards of forty thousand families,” said he, “who have relations confined. If some act of oblivion is not passed, there will be no end in persecution; for the people of this country have no idea of any thing but revenge; and, to gain a point, would swear ten thousand false oaths. Constant efforts are made to get a man taken up in order to rob him. The confiscated property does not reach the king's treasury.—All thieves! It is selling; for nothing. His own people whom he employs, are buying it up, and the vagabonds pocket the whole. I should not be surprised to hear that they brought a bill of expenses against him for the sale.”

The Sicilian court, however, were at this time duly sensible of the services which had been rendered them by the British fleet, and their gratitude to Nelson was shown with proper and princely munificence. They gave him the dukedom and domain of Bronte, worth about £3000 a year. It was some days before he could be persuaded to accept it: the argument which finally prevailed, is said to have been suggested, by the queen, and urged, at her request, by Lady Hamilton upon her knees. “He considered his own honour too much,” she said, “if he persisted in refusing what the king and queen felt to be absolutely necessary for theirs.” The king himself, also, is said to have addressed him in words which show that the sense of rank will sometimes confer a virtue upon those who seem to be most unworthy of the lot to which



they have been born : “ Lord Nelson, do you wish that your name alone should pass with honour to posterity, and that I, Ferdinand Bourbon, should appear ungrateful ?” He gave him also, when the dukedom was accepted, a diamond-hilted sword, which his father, Charles III. of Spain, had given him, on his accession to the throne of the two Sicilies. Nelson said, “ The reward was magnificent, and worthy of a king, and he was determined that the inhabitants on the domain should be the happiest in all his Sicilian majesty’s dominions. Yet,” said he, speaking of these and the other remunerations which were made him for his services, “ these presents, rich, as they are, do not elevate me. My pride is, that, at Constantinople, from the grand seignor to the lowest Turk, the name of Nelson is familiar in their mouths ; and in this country I am every thing which a grateful monarch and people can call me.” Nelson, however, had a pardonable pride in the outward and visible signs of honour, which he had so fairly won. He was fond of his Sicilian title ; the signification, perhaps pleased him ;—Duke of Thunder was what in Dahamony would be called a *strong name* ; it was to a sailor’s taste ; and, certainly, to no man could it ever be more applicable. But a simple offering which he received not long afterward, from the island of Zante, affected him with a deeper and finer feeling. The Greeks of that little community sent him a golden-headed sword and a truncheon, set round with all the diamonds that the island could furnish, in a single row. They thanked him “ for having, by his victory, preserved that part of Greece from horrors of anarchy ; and prayed that his exploits might accelerate the day, in which, amid the glory and peace of thrones, the miseries of the human race would cease.” The unexpected tribute touched Nelson to the heart. “ No officer,” he said, “ had ever received from any country a higher acknowledgment of his services.”

The French still occupied the Roman states ; from which, according to their own admission, they had extorted in jewels, plate, specie and requisitions of every kind, to the enormous amount of eight millions sterling : yet they affected to appear as deliverers among the people whom they were thus cruelly plundering ; and they distributed portraits of Buonaparte, with the blasphemous inscription—“ This is the true likeness of the holy saviour of the world !” The people, detesting the impiety, and groaning beneath the exactions, of these perfidious robbers, were ready to join any regular force that should come to their assistance ; but they dreaded Cardinal Ruffo’s rabble, and declared they would resist him as a banditti, who came only for pillage. Nelson perceived that no object was now so essential for the tranquility of Naples as the recovery of Rome. He applied, therefore, to Sir James St. Clair Erskine, who, in the absence of Gen. Fox, commanded at Minorca, to assist in this great object with 1200 men. “ The field of glory,” said he, is a large one, and was never more open to any one, than at this moment to you. Rome would throw open her gates and receive you as her deliverer ; and the pope would owe his restoration to a heretic.” But Sir James Erskine looked only at the difficulties of the undertaking. “ Twelve hundred men, he thought, would be too small a force to be committed in such an enterprize ; for Civita Vec-



chia was a regular fortress : the local situation and climate also were such, that, even if this force were adequate, it would be proper to delay the expedition till October. Gen. Fox, too, was soon expected ; and during his absence, and under existing circumstances, he did not feel justified in sending away such a detachment."

What this general thought it imprudent to attempt, Nelson and Trowbridge effected without his assistance, by a small detachment from the fleet. Trowbridge first sent Capt. Hallowell to Civita Vecchia, to offer the garrison there, and at Castle St. Angelo, the same terms which had been granted at Gaïeta. Hallowell perceived, by the overstrained civility of the officers who came off to him, that they were sensible of their own weakness ; but the French know, that while they are in a condition to serve their government, they can rely upon it for every possible exertion in their support. Upon Hallowell's report, Trowbridge, who had now been made Sir Thomas for his services, sent Capt. Louis with a squadron, to enforce the terms which he had offered ; and as soon as he could leave Naples, he himself followed. The French, who had no longer any hope from the fate of arms, relied upon their skill in negotiation, and proposed terms to Trowbridge with that effrontery which characterizes their public proceedings ; but which is as often successful as it is impudent. Their ambassador at Rome began by saying, that the Roman territory was the property of the French by right of conquest. The British commodore settled that point, by replying, "It is mine by re-conquest." A capitulation was soon concluded for all the Roman states, and Capt. Louis rowed up the Tiber in his barge, hoisted English colours on the capitol, and acted, for the time, as governor of Rome. The prophecy of the Irish poet was thus accomplished, and the friar reaped the fruits ; for Nelson, who was struck with the oddity of the circumstance, and not a little pleased with it, obtained preferment for him from the king of Sicily, and recommended him to the pope.

Having thus completed his work upon the continent of Italy, Nelson's whole attention was directed towards Malta ; where Capt. Ball, with most inadequate means was besieging the French garrison. Never was any officer engaged in a more anxious or painful service. men, money, food ; all things were wanting. The garrison consisted of 5,000 troops ; the besieging force of 500 English and Portuguese marines, and about 1,500 armed peasants. Long and repeatedly did Nelson solicit troops to effect the reduction of this important place ; "It has been no fault of the navy," said he, "that Malta has not been attacked by land : but we have neither the means ourselves, nor influence with those who have." The same causes of demurer existed which prevented the British troops from assisting in the expulsion of the British troops from Rome. Sir James Erskine was expecting Gen. Fox ; he could not act without orders ; and not having, like Nelson, that lively spring of hope within him, which partakes enough of the nature of faith to work miracles in war, he thought it "evident, that unless a respectable land force, in numbers sufficient to undertake the siege of such a garrison, in one of the strongest places in Europe, and supplied with proportionable artillery and stores, were sent against it, no reasonable hope could be entertained of its surrender." Nelson groaned over the spirit of over-reasoning caution and unreasoning obedience. "My heart," said he, is almost broken. If the enemy gets



supplies in, we may bid adieu to Malta: all the force we can collect would then be of little avail against the strongest place in Europe.—To say that an officer is never for any object, to alter his orders, is what I cannot comprehend. The circumstances of this war so often vary, that an officer has almost every moment to consider, what would my superiors direct, did they know what is passing under my nose. But, sir," said he, writing to the Duke of Clarence, "I find few think as I do. To obey orders is all perfection. To serve my king, and to destroy the French, I consider as the great order of all, from which little ones spring: and if one of these militate against it (for who can tell exactly at a distance.) I go back, and obey the great order and object, to down, down with the damned French villains!—My blood boils at the name of Frenchmen!"

At length, Gen. Fox arrived at Minorea.—and, at length, permitted Col. Graham to go to Malta, but with means miserably limited. In fact, the expedition was at a stand for want of money; when Trowbridge, arriving at Messina, to co-operate in it, and finding this fresh delay, immediately offered all that he could command of his own. "I procured him, my lord," said he to Nelson, 15,000 of my cobs:—every farthing and every atom of me shall be devoted to the cause."—"What can this mean," said Nelson, when he learned that Col. Graham was ordered not to incur any expense for stores, or any articles except provisions!—"the cause cannot stand still for want of a little money. If nobody will pay it, I will sell Bronte, and the Emperor of Russia's box." And he actually pledged Bronte for £6600, if there should be any difficulty about paying the bills. The long-delayed expedition was thus, at last, sent forth: but Trowbridge little imagined in what scenes of misery he was to bear his part. He looked to Sicily for supplies: it was the interest, as well as the duty, of the Sicilian government to use every exertion for furnishing them: and Nelson and the British ambassador were on the spot to press upon them the necessity of exertion. But though Nelson saw with what a knavish crew the Sicilian court was surrounded, he was blind to the vices of the court itself; and resigning himself wholly to Lady Hamilton's influence, never even suspected the crooked policy which it was remorselessly pursuing. The Maltese and the British in Malta severely felt it. Trowbridge, who had the truest affection for Nelson, knew his infatuation, and feared that it might prove injurious to his character, as well as fatal to an enterprise which had begun so well, and been carried on so patiently.

"My lord," said he, writing to him from the siege, "we are dying off fast for want. I learn that Sir William Hamilton says Prince Luzzi refused corn some time ago, and Sir William does not think it worth while making another application. If that be the case, I wish he commanded this distressing scene instead of me. Pugalia had an immense harvest; near thirty sail left Messina, before I did, to load corn. Will they let us have any? if not, a short time will decide the business. The German interest prevails. I wish I was at your Lodship's elbow for an hour. *All, all* will be thrown on you! I will parry the blow as much as in my power: I foresee much mischief brewing.—God bless your lordship; I am miserable, I cannot assist your operations more. Many happy returns of the day to you—(it was the first of the new year)—I



never spent so miserable a one. I am not very tender hearted; but really the distress here would even move a Neapolitan." Soon afterward he wrote, "I have this day saved thirty thousand people from starving; but with this day my ability ceases. As the Government are bent on starving us, I see no alternative, but to leave these poor unhappy people to perish, without our being witnesses of their distress. I curse the day I ever served the Neapolitan government. We have characters, my lord, to lose; these people have none. Do not suffer their infamous conduct to fall on us. Our country is just, but severe. Such is the fever of my brain this minute, that I assure you, on my honour, if the Palermo traitors were here, I would shoot them first, and then myself. Girgenti is full of corn; the money is ready to pay for it; we do not ask it as a gift. Oh! could you see the horrid distress I daily experience, something would be done.—Some engine is at work against us at Naples; and I believe I hit on the proper person. If you complain, he will be immediately promoted, agreeably to the Neapolitan custom. All I write to you is known at the queen's. For my own part, I look upon the Neapolitans as the worst of intriguing enemies: every hour shows me their infamy and duplicity. I pray your lordship be cautious: your honest, open manner of acting will be made a handle of. When I see you, and tell of their infamous tricks, you will be as much surprised as I am. The whole will fall on you."

Nelson was not insensible to the distress which his friend so earnestly represented. He begged small supplies of money and corn, to keep the Maltese from starving. And when the court granted a small supply, protesting their poverty, he believed them. The anxiety which he endured, affected him so deeply, that he said it had broken his spirit forever. Happily, all that Trowbridge had foreboded, did not come to pass. For Capt. Ball ventured upon a resolute measure, for which his name would deserve always to be held in veneration by the Maltese, even if it had no other claims to the love and reverence of a grateful people. Finding it hopeless longer to look for succour from the infatuated court of Sicily, which persisted in prohibiting the exportation of supplies, at his own risk he sent his first Lieut. to the port of Girgenti, with orders to seize and bring with him to Malta, the ships which were there lying laden with corn. These orders were executed; the necessity of raising the siege was removed, and Capt. Hall waited for the consequences to himself. The Neapolitan government complained to the English ambassador, and the complaint was communicated to Nelson, who requested Sir W. Hamilton would fully and plainly state that the act ought not to be considered as any intended disrespect to his Sicilian majesty, but as of the most absolute and imperious necessity; the alternation being either of abandoning Malta to the French, or of anticipating the king's orders for carrying the corn in those vessels to Malta. "I trust," he added, "that the government of the country will never again force any of our royal master's servants to so unpleasant an alternative." Nelson himself sailed for Malta. He fell in with a French squadron, bound for its relief, consisting of a 74, 3 frigates, and a corvette. One frigate and the line-of-battle ship were taken; and the others failed in their purpose of reaching La Valette. This success was peculiarly gratifying to Nelson for ma-



ny reasons. Two frigates, and the *Guillaume Tell*, 86, were all that now remained of the fleet which Buonaparte had conducted to Egypt. The *Guillaume Tell* was at this time closely watched in the harbour of La Valette: and shortly afterward was taken, after an action in which greater skill was never displayed by British ships, nor greater gallantry by an enemy. Nelson rejoiced at what he called this glorious finish to the whole French Mediterranean fleet. "What a pleasure," said he "to have the Nile fleet all taken, under my orders and regulations!" The two frigates still remained in La Valette: before its surrender they stole out; one was taken in the attempt; the other was the only ship of the whole fleet which escaped capture or destruction.

Letters were found on board the *Tell*, showing that the French were become hopeless of preserving the conquest which they had so foully acquired. The officers were anxious that Nelson should have the honour of signing the capitulation. Sir W. Hamilton had just been superseded: Nelson had no feeling or cordiality towards Lord Keith; and thinking that, after Earl St. Vincent, no man had so good a claim to the command in the Mediterranean as himself, he applied for permission to return to England, telling the first lord of the Admiralty, that his spirit could not submit patiently, and that he was a broken-hearted man. From the time of his return from Egypt, amid all the honours which were showered upon him, he had suffered many mortifications. Sir Sidney Smith had been sent to Egypt, with orders to take under his command the squadron which Nelson had left there.—Sir Sidney appears to have thought that this command was to be independent of Nelson: and Nelson himself thinking so, determined to return, saying to Earl St. Vincent, "I do feel, for I am a man, that it is impossible for me to serve in these seas with a squadron under a junior officer." He differed from Sir Sidney as to the policy which ought to be pursued towards the French in Egypt; and strictly commanded him not to permit a Frenchman to leave the country; that he considered it madness to permit that band of thieves to return to Europe. If Nelson had not thoroughly understood the character of the enemy, their conduct in Egypt would have disclosed it. After the battle of the Nile he had landed all his prisoners, upon a solemn engagement that none of them should serve till regularly exchanged. They were no sooner on shore than part of them were drafted into different regiments, and the remainder formed into a corps. This occasioned Capt. Hallowell to say, that the French had forfeited all claim to respect from us. "The army of Buonaparte are entirely destitute of every principle of honour." Buonaparte's escape was the more regretted by Nelson, because, if he had had sufficient force, he thought it would certainly have been prevented. He wished to keep ships upon the watch, to intercept any thing coming from Egypt: but the Admiralty calculated upon the assistance of the Russian fleet, which failed when it was most wanted. The bloody Corsican was thus enabled to reach Europe in safety; there to become the guilty instrument of a wider-spreading destruction than any with which the world had ever before been visited.

A ship could not be spared to convey Nelson to England; he therefore travelled through Germany to Hamburgh, in company with his inseparable friends, Sir W. and Lady Hamilton. The queen of Naples went with them to Venna. When they were at Leghorn, upon



a report that the French were approaching, the people rose tumultuously, and would fain have persuaded Nelson to lead them against the enemy. The prince of Esterhazy entertained him in a style of Hungarian magnificence. A wine merchant, above 70 years of age, requested to speak with Lady Hamilton, and told her he had some Rhenish wine, of the vintage of 1625, which had been in his possession more than half a century: he had preserved it for some extraordinary occasion; and that which had now arrived was far beyond any that he could ever have expected. His request was, that her ladyship would prevail upon Lord Nelson to accept 6 doz. of this incomparable wine; part of it would then have the honour to flow into the heart's blood of that immortal hero; and this thought would make him happy during the remainder of his life. Nelson, when this singular request was reported to him, went into the room, and taking the worthy old gentleman kindly by the hand, consented to receive 6 bottles, provided the donor would dine with him next day.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Nelson separates himself from his Wife—Northern Confederacy—He goes to the Baltic, under Sir Hyde Parker—Battle of Copenhagen, and subsequent Negotiation—Nelson is made a Viscount.*

Nelson was welcomed in England with every mark of popular honour. At Yarmouth, where he landed, every ship in the harbor hoisted her colours. The mayor and corporation waited upon him with the freedom of the town. In London, he was feasted by the city, and received the thanks of the common council for his great victory, and a golden-hilted sword, studded with diamonds. Nelson had every earthly blessing, except domestic happiness: he had forfeited that for ever. Before he had been three months in England he separated from Lady Nelson. Some of his last words to her were: "I call God to witness, there is nothing in you or your conduct that I wish otherwise." This was the consequence of his infatuated attachment to Lady Hamilton. It had before caused a quarrel with his son-in-law.

The Addington administration was just at this time formed; and Nelson, who had been made vice-admiral of the blue, was sent to the Baltic, as second in command, under Sir Hyde Parker, by Earl St. Vincent, the new first lord of the Admiralty. The three northern courts had formed a confederacy for making England resign her naval rights. Of these courts, Russia was guided by the passions of its emperor, Paul. Denmark was French at heart: ready to co-operate in all the views of France, to recognise all her usurpations. Sweden, under a king whose principles were right, and whose feelings were generous, acted in acquiescence with the dictates of two powers whom it feared to offend. The Danish navy consisted of 23 ships of the line with about 31 frigates and smaller vessels, exclusive of guard-ships. Sweden had 18 ships of the line, 14 frigates and sloops, 74 galleys and smaller vessels, besides gun-boats; and this force was in a far better



state of equipment than the Danish. The Russians had 82 sail of the line and 40 frigates. But the Russian fleet was ill-manned, ill-officered, and ill-equipped. Such a combination under the influence of France would soon have become formidable ; and never did the British cabinet display more decision than in instantly preparing to crush it. They erred in permitting any petty consideration to prevent them from appointing Nelson to the command. The public properly murmured at seeing it intrusted to another. When Nelson joined the fleet at Yarmouth, he found the admiral " a little nervous about dark nights and fields of ice."—"But we must brace up," said he ; "these are not times for nervous systems. I hope we shall give our northern enemies that hailstorm of bullets, which gives our dear country the dominion of the sea. We have it, and all the devils in the north cannot take it from us, if our wooden walls have fair play.

The fleet sailed on the 12th of March. Mr. Vansittart sailed in it ; the British cabinet still hoping to obtain its end by negotiation. It was well for England that Sir Hyde Parker placed a fuller confidence in Nelson than the government seems to have done at this most important crisis. Mr. Vansittart left the fleet at the Scaw, and preceded it in a frigate with a flag of truce. Precious time was lost by this delay, which was to be purchased by the dearest blood of Britain and Denmark : according to the Danes themselves, the intelligence that a British fleet was seen off the Sound produced a much more general alarm in Copenhagen than its arrival in the Roads. Nelson had a long conference with Sir Hyde ; and the next day addressed a letter to him, worthy of himself and of the occasion. Mr. Vansittart's report had then been received. It represented the Danish government as in the highest degree hostile ; and their state of preparation as exceeding what our cabinet had supposed possible : for Denmark had profited of the leisure which had so impolitically been given her. "The more I have reflected," said Nelson to his commander, "the more I am confirmed in opinion, that not a moment should be lost in attacking the enemy."

Supposing him to force the passage of the Sound, Nelson tho't some damage might be done among the masts and yards ; though perhaps not one of them but would be serviceable again. "If the wind be fair," said he, "and you determine to attack the ships and Crown Islands, you must expect the natural issue of such a battle—ships crippled, and perhaps one or two lost ; for the wind which carries you in, will most probably not bring out a crippled ship. It will not prevent the Revel ships or the Swedes from joining the Danes : and to prevent this is, a measure absolutely necessary : and still to attack Copenhagen." For this he proposed two modes. One was, to pass Cronenburg, taking the risk of danger ; taking the deepest and straightest channel. This would prevent a junction, and might give an opportunity of bombarding Copenhagen. Or to take the passage of the Belt, which might be accomplished in four or five days ; and then the attack by Draco might be made, and the junction of the Russians prevented. Supposing them thro' the Belt, he proposed that a detachment of the fleet should be sent to destroy the Russian squadron at Revel ; and that the business at Copenhagen should be attempted with the remainder.

The pilots, as men who had nothing but safety to think of, were terrified by the formidable report of the batteries of Elsinore, and the tremendous preparations which our negotiators, who were now returned



from their fruitless mission, had witnessed. They therefore persuaded Sir Hyde to prefer the passage of the Belt. "Let it be by the Sound, by the Belt, or any how," cried Nelson, "only lose not an hour!" On the 27th they sailed for the Belt: such was the habitual reserve of Sir Hyde, that his own captain, the captain of the fleet, did not know which course he had resolved to take till the fleet were getting under way. When Capt. Domett was thus apprised of it, he felt it his duty to represent to the admiral his belief that if that course were persevered in, the ultimate object would be totally defeated: it was liable to long delays, and to accidents of ships' grounding; in the whole fleet there were only one captain and one pilot who knew any thing of this formidable passage, and their knowledge was very slight: their instructions did not authorize them to attempt it;—supposing them safe thro' the Belts, the heavy ships could not come over the *Grounds* to attack Copenhagen; and light vessels would have no effect on such a line of defence as had been prepared against them. Domett urged these reasons so forcibly that Sir Hyde was shaken in his opinion, and he consented to bring the fleet to, and send for Nelson on board. There can be little doubt but that the expedition would have failed, if Captain Domett had not thus timely and early given his advice. Nelson entirely agreed with him; and it was finally determined to take the passage of the Sound; and the fleet returned to its former anchorage.

The next day was more idly expended in despatching a flag of truce to the Governor of Cronenburg Castle, to ask whether he had received orders to fire at the British fleet; as the admiral must consider the first gun to be a declaration of war on the part of Denmark. A soldier-like and becoming answer was returned to this formality. The governor said, that the British minister had not been sent away from Copenhagen, but had obtained a passport at his own demand. He himself, as a soldier, could not meddle with politics; but he was not at liberty to suffer a fleet, of which the intention was not yet known, to approach the guns of the castle which he had the honour to command: and he requested, if the British admiral should think proper to make any proposals to the king of Denmark, that he might be apprized of it before the fleet approached nearer. During this intercourse, a Dane, who came on board the commander's ship, having occasion to express his business in writing, found the pen blunt; and, holding it up, sarcastically said, "If your guns are not better pointed than your pens, you will make little impression on Copenhagen!"

On that day, intelligence reached the admiral of the loss of one of his fleet, the *Invincible*, seventy-four, wrecked on a sandbank, as she was coming out of Yarmouth; 400 of her men perished in her. Nelson, who was now appointed to lead the van, shifted his flag to the *Elephant*, Capt. Foley—a lighter ship than the *St. George*, and therefore fitter for the expected operations. The two following days were calm. Orders had been given to pass the Sound as soon as the wind would permit; and on the afternoon of the 29th, the ships were cleared for action, with an alacrity characteristic of British seamen. At daybreak on the 30th, it blew a topsail breeze from the north-west. The signal was made, and the fleet moved on in order of battle; Nelson's division in the van, Sir Hyde's in the centre, and Admiral Grave's in the rear.



The Sound being the only frequented entrance to the Baltic, the great Mediterranean of the North, few parts of the sea display so frequent a navigation. In the height of the season not fewer than 100 vessels pass every 24 hours, for many weeks in succession: but never had so busy or so splendid a scene been exhibited there as on this day, when the British fleet prepared to force that passage, where, till now, all ships had veiled their topsails to the flag of Denmark. The whole force consisted of 51 sail of various descriptions; of which 16 were of the line. The greater part of the bomb and gun vessels took their stations off Cronenburg Castle, to cover the fleet; while others on the larboard were ready to engage the Swedish shore. The Danes, having improved every moment which ill-timed negotiation and baffling weather gave them, had lined their shore with batteries; and as soon as the Monarch, which was the leading ship, came abreast of them, a fire was opened from about 100 pieces of cannon and mortars: our light vessels immediately, in return, opened their fire upon the castle. Here was all the pompous circumstance, and exciting reality of war, without its effects; for this ostentatious display was but a bloodless prelude of the wide and sweeping destruction which was soon to follow. The enemies' shot fell near enough to splash the water on board our ships: not relying upon any forbearance of the Swedes, they meant to have kept the mid-channel; but, when they perceived that not a shot was fired from Helsinburg, and that no batteries were to be seen on the Swedish shore, they inclined to that side, so as completely to get out of reach of the Danish guns. The uninterrupted blaze which was kept up from them till the fleet had passed, served only to exhilarate our sailors, and afforded them matter of jest, as the shot fell in showers a full cable's length from its destined aim. A few rounds were returned from some of our leading ships till they perceived the inutility of it;—this, however, occasioned the only bloodshed of the day, some of our men being killed and wounded by the bursting of a gun. As soon as the main body had passed, the gun vessels followed, desisting from their bombardment, which had been as innocent as that of the enemy, and about midday, the whole fleet anchored between the island of Huen and Copenhagen. Sir Hyde, with Nelson, Admiral Graves, some of the senior captains, and the commanding officers of the artillery and troops, then proceeded in a lugger, to reconnoitre the enemy's means of defence; a formidable line of ships, redeaus, pontoons, galleys, fire-ships, and gun-boats, flanked and supported by extensive batteries, and occupying, from one extreme point to the other, an extent of nearly four miles.

A council of war was held in the afternoon. It was apparent that the Danes could not be attacked without great difficulty and risk; and some of the members of the council spoke of the number of the Swedes and the Russians whom they should afterward have to engage, as a consideration which ought to be borne in mind. Nelson, who kept pacing the cabin, impatient as he ever was of any thing which savoured of irresolution, repeatedly said, "The more numerous the better; I wish they were twice as many,—the easier the victory, depend on it." The plan upon which he had determined, if ever it should be his fortune to bring a Baltic fleet to action, was, to attack the head of their line, and confuse their movements.—"Close with a Frenchman," he



used to say, "but out-manœuvres a Russian." He offered his services for the attack, requiring ten sail of the line, and the whole of the smaller craft. Sir Hyde gave him two more line-of-battle ships than he asked, and left every thing to his judgement.

The enemy's force was not the only, nor the greatest obstacle with which the British fleet had to contend; there was another to be overcome before they could come in contact with it. The channel was little known, and extremely intricate; all the buoys had been removed, and the Danes considered this difficulty as almost insurmountable thinking the channel impracticable for so large a fleet. Nelson himself saw the soundings made, and the buoys laid down, boating it upon this exhausting service, day and night, until it was effected. When this was done, he thanked God for having enabled him to get through this difficult part of his duty. "It had worn him down," he said, "and was infinitely more grievous to him than any resistance which he could experience from the enemy."

At the first council of war opinions inclined to an attack from the eastward: but the next day, the wind being southerly, after a second examination of the Danish position, it was determined to attack from the south, approaching in the manner which Nelson had suggested in his first thoughts. On the morning of the 1st of April, the whole fleet removed to an anchorage within two leagues of the town, and off the N. W. end of the Middle Ground: a shoal lying exactly before the town, about three quarters of a mile distant, and extending along its whole sea front. The King's channel, where there is deep water, is between this shoal and the town; and here the Danes had arranged their line of Defence, as near the shores as possible; nineteen ships and floating batteries, flanked at the end nearest the town by the Crown Batteries, which were two artificial islands, at the mouth of the harbour—most formidable works; the larger one having, by the Danish account, sixty-six guns; but as Nelson believed, eighty-eight. The fleet having anchored, Nelson, with Rion, in the Amazon, made his last examination on the ground; and about one o'clock, returning to his own ship, threw out the signal to weigh. It was received with a shout throughout the whole division; they weighed with a light and favourable wind: the narrow channel between the island of Saltholm and the Middle Ground had been actually bouyed; the small craft pointed out the course distinctly; Riou led the way; the whole division coasted along the outer edge of the shoal, doubled its farther extremity, and anchored there off Draco Point, just as the darkness closed—the headmost of the enemy's line not being more than two miles distant. The signal to prepare for action had been made early in the evening; and, as his own anchor dropped, Nelson called out, "I will fight them the moment I have a fair wind." It had been agreed that Sir Hyde, with the remaining ships, should weigh on the following morning, at the same time as Nelson, to menace the Crown batteries on his side, and the four ships of the line which lay at the entrance of the arsenal; and to cover our own disabled ships as they came out of action.



The Danes, meantime, had not been idle: no sooner did the guns of Cronenburg make it known to the whole city that all negotiation was at an end, that the British fleet was passing the Sound, and that the dispute between the two crowns must now be decided by arms, than a spirit displayed itself most honourable to the Danish character. All ranks offered themselves to the service of their country; the university furnished a corps of twelve hundred youths, the flower of Denmark: it was one of those emergencies in which little drilling or discipline is necessary to render courage available; they had nothing to learn but how to manage the guns, and day and night were employed in practising them. When the movements of Nelson's squadron were perceived, it was known when and where the attack was to be expected, and the line of defence was manned indiscriminately by soldiers, sailors, and citizens. Had not the whole attention of the Danes been directed to strengthen their own means of defence, they might most materially have annoyed the invading squadron, and, perhaps, frustrated the impending attack; for the British ships were crowded in an anchoring ground of little extent:—it was calm, so that mortar-boats might have acted against them to the utmost advantage; and they were within range of shells from Amak island. A few fell among them but the enemy soon ceased to fire. It was learned afterward, that, fortunately for the fleet, the bed of the mortar had given way; and the Danes either could not get it replaced, or, in the darkness, lost their direction.

This was an awful night for Copenhagen.—far more so than for the British fleet, where the men were accustomed to battle and victory, and had none of those objects before their eyes which rendered death terrible. Nelson sat down to table with a large party of his officers: he was, as he was ever wont to be when on the eve of action, in high spirit, and drank to a leading wind, and to the success of the morrow. After supper they returned to their respective ships, except Riou, who remained to arrange the order of battle with Nelson and Foley, and to draw up instruction; Hardy, mean time, went in a small boat to examine the channel between them and the enemy; approaching so near, that he sounded round their leading ship with a pole, lest the noise of throwing the lead should discover him. The incessant fatigue of body as well as mind, which Nelson had undergone during the last three days, had so exhausted him, that he was earnestly urged to his cot; and his old servant Allen, using that kind of authority, which long and affectionate services entitled and enabled him to assume on such occasions, insisted upon his complying. The cot was placed on the floor, and he continued to dictate from it. About eleven, Hardy returned, and reported the practicability of the channel, and the depth of water up to the enemy's line. About one, the orders were completed; and half a dozen clerks, in the foremost cabin proceeded to transcribe them: Nelson frequently calling out to hasten their work, for the wind was becoming fair. Instead of attempting to get a few hours' sleep, he was constantly receiving reports on this important point. At daybreak, it was announced as becoming perfectly fair. The clerks finished their



work about six. Nelson, who was already up, breakfasted, and made signals for all captains. The land forces, and five hundred seamen, under Captain Freemantle and the Hon. Col. Stewart, were to storm the Crown Battery as soon as its fire should be silenced : and Riou—whom Nelson had never seen till this expedition, but whose worth he had instantly perceived, and appreciated as it deserved—had the *Blanche* and *Alcmene* frigates, the *Dart* and *Arrow* sloops, and the *Zephyr* and *Otter* fireships, given him, with a special command to act as circumstances might require :—every other ship had its station appointed.

Between eight and nine, the pilots and masters were ordered on board the Admiral's ships. The pilots were mostly men who had been mates in Baltic traders ; and their hesitation about their bearing off the east end of the shoal, and the exact line of deep water, gave ominous warning of how little their knowledge was to be trusted. The signal for action had been made, the wind was fair—not a moment to be lost. Nelson urged them to be steady,—to be resolute, and to decide : but they wanted the only ground for steadiness and decision in such cases ; and Nelson had reason to regret that he had not trusted to Hardy's single report. This was one of the most painful moments of his life ; and he also spoke of it with bitterness. “ I experienced in the Sound,” said he, “ the misery of having the honour of our country intrusted to a set of pilots, who have no other thought than to keep the ships clear of danger, and their own silly heads clear of shot. Every body knows what I must have suffered : and if any merit attaches itself to me, it was for combating the dangers of the shallows in defiance of them. At length, Mr. Bryerly, the master of the *Bellona*, declared that he was prepared to lead the fleet : his judgement was acceded to by the rest : they returned to their ships ; and, at half-past nine, the signal was made to weigh in succession.

Captain Murray, in the *Edgar*, led the way ; the *Agamemnon* was next in order ; but on the first attempt to leave her anchorage, she could not weather the edge of the shoal ; and Nelson had the grief to see his old ship, in which he had performed so many years' gallant services, immoveably aground, at a moment when her help was so greatly required. Signal was then made for the *Polyphemus* : and this change in the order of sailing was executed with the utmost promptitude : yet so much delay had been thus unavoidably occasioned, that the *Edgar* was for some time unsupported : and the *Polyphemus*, whose place should have been at the head of the enemy's line where their strength was the greatest, could get no farther than the beginning, owing to the difficulty of the channel : there she occupied, indeed an efficient station, but one where his presence was less required. The *Isis* followed, with better fortune, and took her own birth. The *Bellona*, Sir Thomas Bould Thompson, kept too close on the Starboard Shoal, and grounded abreast of the outer ship of the enemy : this was the more vexatious, inasmuch as the wind was fair, the room ample, and three ships had led the way. The *Russell*, following the *Bellona*, grounded in like manner : both were within reach of shot ; but their absence from their



intended stations was severely felt. Each ship had been ordered to pass her leader on the starboard side, because the water was supposed too shallow on the larboard shore. Nelson, who came next after these two ships, thought they had kept too far on the starboard direction, and made signal for them to close with the enemy, not knowing that they were aground : but when he perceived that they did not obey the signal, he ordered the Elephant's helm, to starboard, and went within these ships : thus quitting the appointed order of sailing, and guiding those which were to follow. The greater part of the fleet were probably by this act of promptitude on his part, saved from going on shore. Each ship as she arrived nearly opposite her appointed station, let her anchor go by the stern, and presented her broadside to the Danes. The distance between each was about half a cable. The action was fought nearly at the distance of a cable's length from the enemy. This, which rendered its continuance so long, was owing to the ignorance and consequent decision of the pilots. In pursuance of the same error which had led the *Bellona* and the *Russel* aground, they, when the lead was at a quarter less five, refused to approach nearer, in dread of shoaling their water on the larboard shore : a fear altogether erroneous, for the water deepened up to the very side of the enemy's line.

At 5-minutes after ten the action began ; and by half-past 11 the battle became general. The plan of the attack had been complete. Of 12 ships of the line, one was entirely useless, and two others in a situation where they could not render half the service which was required of them. Of the squadron of gun-brigs, only one could get into action ; the rest were prevented by baffling currents from weathering the eastern end of the shoal ; only two bomb-vessels could reach their station and open their mortars on the arsenal. Nelson's agitation had been extreme when he saw himself deprived of the fourth part of his ships of the line ; but no sooner was he in battle, where his squadron was received with the fire of 1,000 guns, than his countenance brightened ; and, as a bystander describes him, his conversation became joyous and animated. The commander-in-chief suffered the most dreadful anxiety. To get to the assistance of Nelson was impossible ; both wind and current were against him. Fear of the event, in such circumstances, would naturally preponderate in the bravest mind ; and perceiving that, after three hours, the enemy's fire was unslackened, he began to despair. "I will make the signal of recall," said he to his captain, "for Nelson's sake. If he is in a condition to continue the action successfully, he will disregard it ; if he is not, it will be an excuse for his retreat, and no blame can be imputed to him." Captain Domett urged him at least to delay the signal, till he could communicate with Nelson ; but, in Sir Hyde's opinion, the danger was too pressing for delay :—"The fire," he said, "was too hot for Nelson to oppose ; a retreat he thought must be made,—he was aware of the consequences to his own personal reputation, but it would be cowardly in him to leave Nelson to bear the whole shame of the failure, if shame it should be deemed." Under a mistaken judgment, therefore, but with this disinterested and generous feeling, he made the signal for retreat.

Nelson was at this time, in all the excitement of action, pacing the quarter-deck. A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters as



hout; and he observed to one of his officers with a smile, "It is warm work; and this day may be the last to any of us at a moment:"—and then, stopping short at the gangway, added, with emotion—"But mark you! I would not be elsewhere for thousands." About this time the signal lieutenant called out, that number thirty-nine (the signal for discontinuing the action), was thrown out by the commander-in-chief.—He continued to walk the deck, and appeared to take no notice of it. The signal officer met him at the next turn, and asked if he should repeat it. "No," he replied; "acknowledge it." Presently he called after him to know if the signal for close action was still hoisted; and being answered in the affirmative, said, "Mind you keep it so." He now paced the deck, moving the stump of his lost arm in a manner which always indicated great emotion. "Do you know," said he to Mr. Ferguson, "what is shown on board the commander-in-chief? Numbr thirty-nine!" Mr. Ferguson asked what that meant. "Why, to leave off action!" Then, shrugging up his shoulders, he repeated the words—"Leave off action? Now, damn me if I do! You know, Foley," turning to the captain, "I have only one eye,—I have a right to be blind sometimes:"—and then, putting the glass to his blind eye, in that mood of mind which sports with bitterness, he exclaimed, "I really do not see the signal!" Presently he exclaimed, "Damn the signal. Keep mine for closer battle flying! That's the way I answer such signals! Nail mine to the mast!"

Admiral Graves, who was so situated that he could not discern what was done on board the *Elephant*, disobeyed Sir Hyde's signal in like manner. The other ships of the line, looking only to Nelson, continued the action. The signal, however, saved Riou's little squadron, but did not save its heroic leader. This squadron, which was nearer the commander-in-chief, obeyed, and hauled off. For a long time the *Amazon* had been firing, enveloped in smoke, when Riou desired his men to stand fast, and let the smoke clear off, that they might see what they were about. A fatal order; for the Danes then got clear sight of her from the batteries, and pointed their guns with such tremendous effect, that nothing but the signal for retreat saved this frigate from destruction. "What will Nelson think of us!" was Riou's mournful exclamation, when he unwillingly drew off. He had been wounded in the head by a splinter, and was sitting on a gun, encouraging his men, when, just as the *Amazon* showed her stern to the *Trekoner* battery, his clerk was killed by his side; and another shot swept away several marines, who were hauling in the main brace. "Come, then, my boys!" cried Riou; "let us die all together!" The words had scarcely been uttered, before a raking shot cut him in two. Except it had been Nelson himself, the British navy could not have suffered a severer loss.

The action continued along the line with unabated vigour on our side, and with the most determined resolution on the part of the Danes. They fought to great advantage, because most of the vessels in their line of defence were without masts: the few which had any standing had their topmasts struck, and the hulls could not be seen at intervals. The *Isis* must have been destroyed by the superior weight of her enemy's fire, if Capt. Inman, in the *Desiree* frigate, had not judiciously taken a situation which had enabled him to rake the *Dane*, and if the



Polyphemus had not also relieved her. Both in the *Bellona* and *Isis* many were lost by the bursting of their guns. The former ship was about forty years old, and these guns were believed to be the same which she had taken to sea: they were, probably, originally faulty, for the fragments were full of little air-holes. The *Bellona* lost 75 men; the *Isis*, 110; the *Monarch*, 210. She was, more than any other line-of-battle ship, exposed to the great battery; and, supporting at the same time the united fire of the *Holstein* and the *Zealand*, her loss this day exceeded that of any single ship during the whole war. Amid the tremendous carnage in this vessel, some of the men displayed a singular instance of coolness; the pork and pease happened to be in the kettle; a shot knocked its contents about; they picked up the pieces, and ate and fought at the same time.

The prince royal had taken his station upon one of the batteries, from whence he beheld the action, and issued his orders. Denmark had never been engaged in so arduous a contest, and never did the Danes more nobly display their national courage; a courage not more unhappily, than impolitically exerted in subserviency to the interest of France. Capt. Thura, of the *Indfødsretten*, fell early in the action; and all his officers, except one lieutenant and one marine officer, were either killed or badly wounded. In the confusion, the colors were either struck, or shot away; but she was moored athwart one of the batteries, in such a situation that the British made no attempt to board her; and a boat was despatched to the prince, to inform him of her situation. He turned to those about him, and said, "Gentlemen, Thura is killed; which of you will take the command?" Schroedersee, a captain who had lately resigned, on account of extremely ill health, answered in a feeble voice, "I will!" and hastened on board. The crew, perceiving a new commander coming alongside, hoisted their colours again, and fired another broadside. Schroedersee, when he came on deck, found himself surrounded by the dead and wounded, and called to those in the boat to get quickly on board: a ball struck him at that moment. A lieutenant, who had accompanied him, then took the command, and continued to fight the ship.

Between one and two, the fire of the enemy slackened; about two, it ceased from the greater part of their line, and some of their lighter ships were adrift. It was, however, difficult to take possession of those who struck, because the batteries on Amak Island protected them; and because an irregular fire was kept up from the ships themselves as the boats approached. This arose from the nature of the action; the crews were continually reinforced from the shore; and fresh men coming on board, and not inquire whether the flag had been struck, or, perhaps, did not heed it; many, or most of them, not having been engaged in war before,—knowing, therefore, of its laws, and thinking only of defending their country to the last extremity. The *Danbrog* fired upon the *Elephant's* boats in this manner, though the commodore had removed her penant and deserted her, though she was in flames. After she had abandoned the commodore, Braum fought her until he lost his right hand, and then Capt. Lemming took the command. This unexpected renewal of her fire, made the *Elephant* and *Glatton* renew



theirs, till she was not only silenced, but nearly every man in the prizes, ahead and astern of her, were killed. When the smoke of her guns died away, she was seen drifting in flames before the wind: those of her crew who remained alive, and able to exert themselves, throwing themselves out at our port-holes. Capt. Bertie, of the *Ardent*, sent his launch to their assistance, and saved three-and-twenty of them.

By half-past two the action had ceased along that part of the line which was astern of the *Elephant*, but not with the ships ahead and the Crown batteries. Nelson, seeing the manner in which his boats were fired upon, when they went to take possession of the prizes, became angry, and said, he must either send on shore to have this irregular proceeding stopped, or send a fireship and burn them. Half the shot from the *Trekroner*, and from the batteries at Amak, at this time struck the surrendered ships, four of which had got close together: and the fire of the English, in return, was equally, or even more, destructive to these poor devoted Danes. Nelson, who was as humane as he was brave, was shocked at this massacre,—for such he called it; and with a presence of mind peculiar to himself, and never more signally displayed than now, he retired into the stern-gallery, and wrote thus to the Crown Prince: “Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson has been commanded to spare Denmark, when she no longer resists. The line of defence which covered her shores has struck to the British flag; but if the firing is continued on the part of Denmark, he must set on fire all the prizes that he has taken, without having the power of saving the men who have so nobly defended them. The brave Danes are the brothers, and should never be the enemies, of the English.” A wafer was given him; but he ordered a candle to be brought from the cockpit, and sealed the letter with wax, affixing a larger seal than he ordinarily used. “This,” said he, is no time to appear hurried and informal.” Capt. Sir Frederic Thesiger, who acted as his aid-de-camp, carried this letter with a flag of truce. Meantime, the fire of the ships ahead, and the approach of the *Ramillies* and *Defence*, from Sir Hyde’s division, which had now worked near enough to alarm the enemy, though not to injure them, silenced the remainder of the Danish line to the eastward of the *Trekroner*. That battery, however, continued its fire. This formidable work, owing to the want of the ships that had been destined to attack it, and the inadequate force of Riou’s little squadron, was comparatively uninjured: towards the close of the action, it had been manned with nearly 15,000 men; and the intention of storming it, for which every preparation had been made, was abandoned as impracticable.

During Thesiger’s absence, Nelson sent for Freemantle, from the *Ganges*, and consulted with him and Foley, whether it was advisable to advance, with those ships which had sustained least damage, against the yet uninjured part of the Danish line. They were decidedly of opinion, that the best thing which could be done was, while the wind continued fair to remove the fleet out of the intricate channel, from which it had to retreat. In somewhat more than half an hour after Thesiger had been despatched, the Danish adjutant general Lindholm came, bearing a flag of truce; upon which the *Trekroner* ceased to fire, and the action ceased, after four hour’s continuance. He brought



an inquiry from the prince, What was the object of Nelson's note? The British admiral wrote in reply: "Lord Nelson's object in sending the flag of truce was humanity: he therefore consents that hostilities shall cease, and that the wounded Danes may be taken on shore. And Lord Nelson will take his prisoners out of the vessels, and burn or carry off his prizes as he shall think fit. Lord Nelson, with humble duty to his royal highness the prince, will consider this the greatest victory he has ever gained, if it may be the cause of a happy reconciliation between his own most gracious sovereign and his majesty the king of Denmark." Sir Frederic Thesiger was despatched a second time with the reply; and the Danish adjutant-general was referred to the commander-in-chief for a conference upon this overture. Lindholm assenting to this, proceeded to the London, which was riding at anchor full four miles off; and Nelson, losing not one of the precious moments which he had thus gained, made signal for his leading ships to weigh in succession; they had the shoal to clear, they were much crippled, and their course was immediately under the guns of the *Trekroner*.

The *Monarch* led the way. This ship had received 26 shot between wind and water. She had not a shroud standing; there was a double-headed shot in the heart of her foremast, and the slightest wind would have sent every mast over her side. The imminent danger from which Nelson had extricated himself soon became apparent: the *Monarch* touched immediately upon a shoal, over which it was pushed by the *Ganges* taking her amid ships; the *Glatton* went clear; but the other two, the *Defiance* and the *Elephant*, grounded about a mile from the *Trekroner*, and there remained fixed for many hours. The *Desiree* frigate also became fast on the same shoal. Nelson left the *Elephant*, soon after she took the ground, to follow Lindholm. The heat of action was over; the sky had suddenly become overcast; white flags were waving from the mastheads of so many shattered ships; and though the work of mutual destruction was at an end, the *Danborg* was drifting in flames: presently she blew up; while our boats were endeavoring to pick up her devoted crew, few of whom could be saved. The fate of these men, after the gallantry which they had displayed, particularly affected Nelson: for there was nothing in this action of that indignation against the enemy, and that impression of retributive justice, which at the Nile had given a sterner temper to his mind. Nelson was not here master of his own movements, as in Egypt; he had won the day by disobeying his orders; and in so far as he had been successful, had convicted the commander-in-chief of an error in judgment. "Well," said he, as he left the *Elephant*, "I have fought contrary to orders, and I shall perhaps be hanged. Never mind: let them!"

This was the language of a man who, while he is giving utterance to an uneasy thought, clothes it half in jest, because he half repents that it has been disclosed. His services had been too eminent on that day—his judgment too conspicuous: which Sir Hyde heartily felt.—It was agreed that there should be a suspension of hostilities for 24 hours; that all the prizes should be surrendered, and the wounded Danes carried on shore. The boats of Sir Hyde's division were actively employed all night in bringing out the prizes, and in getting afloat the ships which were on shore.



This was, indeed, a mournful day for Copenhagen! It was Good Friday; but the general agitation made all distinction of days be forgotten. There were, perhaps, thousands, and more, in that city, who felt the consolations of Christianity; but few or none who could be calm enough to think of its observances. Our loss, in killed and wounded, was 953. Part of this slaughter might have been spared.—The commanding officer of the troops on board one of our ships asked where his men should be stationed? He was told that they could be of no use; that they were not near enough for musketry; and had better go below. This, he said, was impossible—it would be a disgrace that could never be wiped away. They were, therefore, drawn up upon the gangway, to satisfy this cruel point of honour: and there they were mowed down! The loss of the Danes, including prisoners, amounted to about 6,000. The negotiations, meantime, went on; and it was agreed that Nelson should have an interview with the prince the following day. Hardy and Freemantle landed with him. This was a thing as unexampled as the other circumstances of the battle. A strong guard was appointed to escort him to the palace, as much for the purpose of security as of honour. The populace, according to the British account, showed a mixture of admiration, curiosity, and displeasure, at beholding that man in the midst of them who had inflicted such wounds upon Denmark. But there were neither acclamations nor murmurs. “The people,” says a Dane, “did not degrade themselves with the former, nor disgrace themselves with the latter: the admiral was received as one brave enemy ever ought to receive another. The preliminaries of the negotiation were adjusted at this interview. During the repast which followed, Nelson bore willing testimony to the valour of his foes. He told the prince that he had been in a hundred and five engagements, but that this was the most tremendous of all.”

The negotiation was continued during the five following days; and the prizes were disposed of in a manner which was little approved by Nelson. Six line-of-battle ships and eight prizes had been taken. Of these the *Holstein*, sixty-four, was the only one which was sent home. The *Zealand* was a finer ship: but the *Zealand*, and all the others were burned, and their brass battering cannon sunk with the hulls in such shoal water, that, when the fleet returned from Revel, they found the Danes, with craft over the wrecks, employed in getting the guns. Nelson, though he forbore from any public expression of displeasure at seeing the proofs and trophies of his victory destroyed, did not forget to represent to the admiralty the case of those who were thus deprived of their prize money. “Whether,” said he to Earl St. Vincent, “Sir Hyde Parker may mention the subject to you, I know not; for he is rich and does not want it: nor is it, you will not believe me, any desire to get a few hundred pounds that actuates me to address this letter to you but justice to the brave officers and men who fought on that day. It is true, our opponents were in hulks and floats, only adapted for the position they were in; but that made our battle so much the harder, and victory so much the more difficult to obtain. Believe me, I have weighed all circumstances; and, in my conscience, I think that the king should send a gracious message to the house of commons for a gift to this fleet: for what must be the natural feelings of the officers and men belonging to it, to see their rich commander-in-chief burn all the fruits of their victory,—which, if fitted up and sent to England (as ma-



ny of them might have been by dismantling part of our fleet), would have sold for a good round sum."

On the 9th Nelson landed again, to conclude the terms of the armistice. During its continuance the armed ships and vessels of Denmark were to remain in their then actual situation, as to armament, equipment, and hostile position; and the treaty of armed neutrality, as far as related to the co-operation of Denmark, was suspended. The prisoners were to be sent on shore; an acknowledgment being given for them, and for the wounded also, that they might be carried to Great Britain's credit in the account of war in case hostilities should be renewed. The British fleet was allowed to provide itself with all things requisite for the health and comfort of its men. A difficulty arose respecting the duration of the armistice. The Danish commissioners fairly stated their fears of Russia; and Nelson, with that frankness which sound policy and the sense of power seem often to require as well as justify in diplomacy, told them, his reason for demanding a long term was, that he might have time to act against the Russian fleet, and then return to Copenhagen. Neither party would yield upon this point: and one of the Danes hinted at the renewal of hostilities. "Renew hostilities!" cried Nelson to one of his friends,--for he understood French well enough to comprehend what was said, though not to answer it in the same language:—"tell him we are ready at a moment!—ready to bombard this very night!"—The conference, however, proceeded amicably on both sides; and as the commissioners could not agree upon this head, they broke up, leaving Nelson to settle it with the prince. A levee was held forthwith in one of the state rooms; a scene well suited for such a consultation: for all these rooms had been stripped of their furniture, in fear of a bombardment. To a bombardment also Nelson was looking at this time: fatigue and anxiety, and vexation at the dilatory measures of the commander-in-chief, combined to make him irritable: and as he was on the way to the prince's dining room, he whispered to the officer on whose arm he was leaning,—"Though I have only one eye, I can see that all this will burn well." After dinner he was closeted with the prince; and they agreed that the armistice should continue 14 weeks; and that, at its termination, 14 days' notice should be given before the recommencement of hostilities.

For the battle of Copenhagen, Nelson was raised to the rank of Viscount:—an inadequate mark of reward for services so splendid and of such paramount importance to the dearest interests of England. There was, however, some prudence in dealing out honours to him step by step: had he lived long enough, he would have fought his way up to a dukedom.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*Sir Hyde Parker is recalled, and Nelson appointed Commander—He goes to Revel—Settlement of Affairs in the Baltic—Unsuccessful Attempt upon the Flotilla at Bologna—Peace of Amiens—Nelson takes the Command in the Mediterranean on the Renewal of the War—Escape of the Toulon Fleet—Nelson chases them to the West Indies, and back—Delivers up his Squadron to Admiral Cornwallis, and lands in England.*

WHEN Nelson informed Earl St. Vincent that the armistice had been concluded, he told him also, without reserve, his discontent at the dilatoriness and indecision which he witnessed, and could not remedy. "No man," said he, "but those who are on the spot, can tell what I have gone through, and do suffer. I make no scruple in saying, that I would have been at Revel fourteen days ago! that, without this armistice, the fleet would never have gone, but by order of the Admiralty; and with it, I dare say, we shall not go this week. I wanted Sir Hyde to let me, at least, go and cruise off Carlsrona, to prevent the Revel ships from getting in. I said I would not go to Revel to take any of those laurels, which I was sure he would reap there. Think for me, my dear lord;—and if I have deserved well, let me return: If ill, for heaven's sake supersede me,—for I cannot exist in this state."

Fatigue, incessant anxiety, and a climate little suited to one of a tender constitution, which had now for many years been accustomed to genial latitudes, made him at this time seriously determine upon returning home. "If the northern business were not settled," he said, "they must send more admirals, for the keen air of the north had cut him to the heart." He felt the want of activity and decision in the commander-in-chief more keenly; and this affected his spirits, and, consequently his health, more than the inclemency of the Baltic. Soon after the armistice was signed, Sir Hyde proceeded to the eastward, with such ships as were fit for service, leaving Nelson to follow with the rest, as soon as those which had received slight damages should be repaired, and the rest sent to England. In passing between the isles of Amark and Saltholm, most of the ships touched the ground, and some of them stuck fast for a while: no serious injury, however, was sustained. It was sustained. It was intended to act against the Russians first, before the breaking up of the frost should enable them to leave Revel; but learning on the way, that the Swedes had put to sea to effect a junction with them, Sir Hyde altered his course, in hopes of intercepting this part of the enemy's force. Nelson had, at this time, provided for the more pressing emergencies of the service, and prepared, on the 18th, to follow the fleet. The *St. George* drew too much water to pass the channel between the isles without being lightened: the guns were therefore taken out, and put on board an American vessel: a contrary wind, however, prevented Nelson from moving; and on that same evening, while he was thus delayed, information reached him of the Swedish and British fleets, and the probability of an action. The fleet was nearly ten



leagues distant ; and both wind and current contrary ; but it was not possible that Nelson could wait for a favourable season under such an expectation. He ordered his boat immediately, and stepped into it. Night was setting in,—one of the cold spring nights of the north, and it was discovered soon after they had left the ship, that in their haste, they had forgotten to provide him with a boat cloak. He, however, forbade them to return for one : and when one of his companions offered his own great coat, and urged him to make use of it, he replied, “I thank you very much,—but, to tell you the truth, my anxiety keeps me sufficiently warm at present.”

“Do you think,” said he, presently, “that our fleet has quitted Bornholm ? If it has, we must follow it to Carlsrona.” About midnight he reached it, and once more got on board the *Elephant*. On the following morning the Swedes were discovered ; as soon, however, as they perceived the English approached, they retired, and took shelter in Carlsrona, behind the batteries on the island, at the entrance of that port. Sir Hyde sent in a flag of truce, stating, that Denmark had concluded an armistice, and requiring an explicit declaration from the court of Sweden, whether it would adhere to or abandon the hostile measures which it had taken against the rights and interests of Great Britain ? The commander, Vice-Admiral Cronstradt, replied, “That he could not answer a question which did not come within the particular circle of his duty ; but that the King was then at Maloe, and would soon be at Carlsrona.” Gustavus shortly afterward arrived, and an answer was then returned to this effect : “That his Swedish majesty would not, for a moment, fail to fulfil, with fidelity and sincerity, the engagements he had entered into with his allies ; but he would not refuse to listen to equitable proposals made by deputies furnished with proper authority by the king of Great Britain to the united northern powers.” Satisfied with this answer, and with the known disposition of the Swedish court, Sir Hyde sailed for the Gulf of Finland ; but he had not proceeded far, before a despatch boat, from the Russian ambassador at Copenhagen, arrived, bringing intelligence of the death of the emperor Paul : and that his successor, Alexander, had accepted the offer made by England to his father, of terminating the dispute by a convention ; the British admiral was therefore required to desist from all farther hostilities.

It was Nelson’s maxim, that, to negotiate with effect, force should be at hand, and in a situation to act. The fleet, having been reinforced from England, amounted to eighteen sail of the line ; and the wind was fair for Revel. There he would have sailed immediately to place himself between that division of the Russian fleet and the squadron at Cronstadt, in case this offer should prove insincere. Sir Hyde, on the other hand, believed that the death of Paul had effected all which was necessary. The manner of that death, indeed, rendered it apparent, that a change of policy would take place in the cabinet of Petersburg :—but Nelson never trusted any thing to the uncertain events of time, which could possibly be secured by promptitude or resolution. It was not, therefore, without severe mortification, that he saw the commander-in-



chief return to the coast of Zealand, and anchor in Kiøge Bay ; there to wait patiently for what might happen.

There the fleet remained, till despatches arrived from home, on the 5th of May, recalling Sir Hyde, and appointed Nelson commander-in-chief.

Nelson wrote to Earl St. Vincent that he was unable to hold this honourable station. Admiral Graves also was so ill, as to be confined to his bed ; and he entreated that some person might come out and take the command. "I will endeavour," said he, "to do my best while I remain : but, my dear lord, I shall either soon go to heaven I hope, or must rest quiet for a time. If Sir Hyde were gone, I would now be under sail." On the day when this was written he received news of his appointment. Not a moment was now lost. His first signal, as commander-in-chief, was to hoist in all launches, and prepare to weigh : and on the 7th he sailed from Kiøge. Part of his fleet was left at Bornholm, to watch the Swedes : from whom he required and obtained an assurance, that the British trade in the Cattegat, and in the Baltic, should not be molested ; and saying how unpleasant it would be to him if any thing should happen which might, for a moment, disturb the returning harmony between Sweden and Great Britain, he apprized them that he was not directed to abstain from hostilities should he meet with the Swedish fleet at sea.—Meantime, he himself, with ten sail of the line, two frigates, a brig, and a schooner, made for the Gulf of Finland. Paul, in one of the freaks of his tyranny, had seized upon all the British effects in Russia, and even considered British subjects as his prisoners. "I will have all the English shipping and property restored," said Nelson, "but I will do nothing violently,—neither commit the affairs of my country, nor suffer Russia to mix the affairs of Denmark or Sweden with the detention of our ships." The wind was fair, and carried him in four days to Revel Roads. But the bay had been clear of firm ice on the 29th of April, while the English were lying idle at Kiøge. The Russians had cut through the ice in the mole six feet thick, and their whole squadron had sailed for Cronstadt on the third. Before that it had been at the mercy of the English. "Nothing," Nelson said, "if it had been right to make the attack, could have saved one ship of them in two hours after our entering the bay."

It so happened that there was no cause to regret the opportunity which had been lost, and Nelson immediately put the intentions of Russia to the proof. He sent on shore, to say, that he came with friendly views, and was ready to return a salute.—On their part the salute was delayed, till a message was sent to them, to inquire for what reason ; and the officer, whose neglect had occasioned the delay, was put under arrest. Nelson wrote to the emperor, proposing to wait on him personally, and congratulate him on his accession, urged the immediate release of British subjects, and restoration of British property.

The answer arrived on the 16th : Nelson, meantime, had exchanged visits with the governor, and the most friendly intercourse had subsisted between the ships and the shore. Alexander's ministers, in their re-



ply, expressed their surprise at the arrival of a British fleet in a Russian port, and their wish that it should return: they professed, on the part of Russia, the most friendly disposition towards Great Britain; but declined the personal visit of Lord Nelson, unless he came in a single ship. There was a suspicion implied in this, which stung Nelson: and he said, the Russian ministers would never have written thus if their fleet had been at Revel.—He wrote an immediate reply, expressing what he felt: he told the court of Petersburg, “that the word of a British admiral, was as sacred as that of any sovereign’s in Europe.” Having despatched this, he stood out to sea immediately, leaving a brig to bring off the provisions which had been contracted for, and to settle the accounts. On his way down the Baltic, however, he met the Russian admiral Tchitchagof, whom the Emperor, in reply to Sir Hyde’s overtures, had sent to communicate personally with the British commander-in-chief. The reply was such as had been wished and expected: and these negotiators going, seamen-like, straight to their object, satisfied each other of the friendly intentions of their respective governments. Nelson then anchored off Rostock: and there he received an answer to his last despatch from Revel, in which the Russian court expressed their regret that there should have been any misconception between them; informed him, that the British vessels which Paul had detained were ordered to be liberated, and invited him to Petersburg in whatever mode might be most agreeable to himself. Other honours awaited him:—the Duke of Mecklenburgh Strelitz, the queen’s brother, came to visit him on board his ship; and towns of the inland parts of Mecklenburgh sent deputations, with their public books of record, that they might have the name of Nelson in them written by his own hand.

From Rostock the fleet returned to Kioge Bay. Nelson saw that the temper of the Danes towards England was such as naturally arose from the chastisement which they had so recently received. “In this nation,” said he, “we shall not be forgiven for having the upper band of them:—I only thank God we have, or they would try to humble us to the dust.” He saw also that the Danish cabinet was completely subservient to France: a French officer was at this time the companion and counsellor of the crown prince: and things were done in such open violation of the armistice, that Nelson thought a second infliction of vengeance would soon be necessary. He wrote to the Admiralty, requesting a clear and explicit reply to his inquiry, whether the commander-in-chief was at liberty to hold the language becoming a British Admiral?—“Which, very probably,” said he, “if I am here, will break the armistice, and set Copenhagen in a blaze. I see every thing which is dirty and mean going on, and the prince royal at the head of it. Ships have been masted, guns taken on board, floating batteries prepared, and, except hauling out and completing their rigging, every thing is done in defiance of the treaty. My heart burns at seeing the word of a prince, nearly allied to our good king, so falsified: but his conduct is such, that he will lose his kingdom if he goes on; for jacobins rule in Denmark. I have made no representations yet, as it would be useless to do so until I have the power of correction.—All I beg, in the name of the future commander-in-chief, is, that the orders may be clear; for enough is done to break twenty treaties, if it should be wished, or to make the prince royal humble himself before British generosity.”



Nelson was not deceived in his judgment of the Danish cabinet, but the battle of Copenhagen had crippled its power. The death of the czar Paul had broken the confederacy: and that cabinet, therefore, was compelled to defer, till a more convenient season, the indulgence of its enmity towards Great Britain. Soon afterward, Admiral Sir Charles Maurice Pole arrived to take the command. The business, military and political, had by that time been so far completed, that the presence of the British fleet soon became no longer necessary. Sir Charles, however, made the short time of his command memorable, by passing the Great Belt, for the first time, with line-of-battle ships; working through the channel against adverse winds. When Nelson left the fleet, this speedy termination of the expedition, though confidently expected, was not certain; and he, in his unwillingness to weaken the British force, thought at one time of traversing Jutland in his boat, by the canal, to Tonnungen on the Eyder, and finding his way home from thence. This intention was not executed; but he returned in a brig, declining to accept a frigate; which few admirals would have done; especially if, like him, they suffered from sea-sickness in a small vessel. On his arrival at Yarmouth, the first thing he did was to visit the hospital; and see the men who had been wounded in the late battle;—that victory, which had added new glory to the name of Nelson, and which was of more importance even than the battle of the Nile, to the honour, the strength, and security of England.

The feelings of Nelson's friends, upon the news of his great victory at Copenhagen, were highly described by Sir William Hamilton, in a letter to him. "We can only expect," he says, "what we know well and often said, that Nelson *was, is, and to the last will ever be the first.*—Emma did not know whether she was on her head or heels,—in such a hurry to tell your great news, that she could utter nothing but tears of joy and tenderness. I went to Davison, and found him still in bed, having had a severe fit of the gout, and your letter, which he had just received; and he cried like a child: but what was very extraordinary, assured me that, from the instant he had read your letter, all pain had left him, and that he felt himself able to get up and walk about. Your brother, Mrs. Nelson, and Horace dined with us. Your brother was more extraordinary than ever. He would get up suddenly and cut a caper; rubbing his hands every time that the thought of your fresh laurels came into his head. In short, except myself (and your lordships knows that I have some phlegm,) all the company, which was considerable after dinner, were mad with joy. But I am sure that no one really rejoiced more at heart than I did. I have lived too long to have ecstasies! But with calm reflection I felt for my friend having got to the very summit of glory! *The ne plus ultra!* That he has had another opportunity of rendering his country the most important service; and manifesting again his judgment, his intrepidity, and humanity."

He had not been many weeks on shore before he was called upon to undertake a service, for which no Nelson was required. Buonaparte, who was now first consul, and in reality sole ruler of France, was making preparations, upon a great scale, for invading England; but his schemes in the Baltic had been baffled; fleets could not be created as they were wanted; and his armies, therefore, were to come over in gun-



boats, and such small craft, as could be rapidly built or collected for the occasion. From the former governments of France such treats have only been matter of insult and policy: in Buonaparte they were sincere: for this adventurer, intoxicated with success, already began to imagine that all things were to be submitted to his fortune. We had not at that time proved the superiority of our soldiers over the French; and the unreflecting multitude were not to be persuaded that an invasion could only be effected by numerous and powerful fleets. A general alarm was excited; and, condescension to this unworthy feeling, Nelson was appointed to command, extending from Orfordness to Beachy Head, on both shores:—a sort of service, he said, for which he felt no other ability than what might be found in his zeal.

To this service, however, such as it was, he applied with his wonted alacrity: though in no cheerful frame of mind. To Lady Hamilton, his only female correspondent, he says, at this time,—“I am not in very good spirits; and except that our country demands all our services and abilities to bring about an honourable peace, nothing should prevent my being the bearer of my own letter. But, my dear friend, I know you are so true and loyal an Englishwoman, that you would hate those who would not stand forth in defence of our king, laws, religion, and all that is dear to us.—It is your sex that make us go forth, and seem to tell us, ‘None but the brave deserve the fair;’—and if we fall, we still live in the hearts of those females. It is your sex who cherish our memories; and you, my dear honoured friend, are, believe me, the first, the best of your sex. I have been the world around, and in every corner of it, and never yet saw your equal, or even one who could be put in comparison with you. You know how to reward virtue, honour, and courage, and never to ask if it is placed in a prince, duke, lord, or peasant.” Having hoisted his flag in the *Medusa* frigate, he went to reconnoitre Boulogne; the point from which it was supposed the great attempt would be made, and which the French, in fear of an attack themselves, were fortifying with all care. He approached near enough to sink two of their floating batteries, and destroy a few gun-boats, which were without the pier: what damage was done within could not be ascertained. “Boulogne,” he said, “was certainly not a very pleasant place that morning:—but,” he added, “it is not my wish to injure the poor inhabitants; and the town is spared as much as the nature of the service will admit.” Enough was done to show the enemy that they could not, with impunity, come outside their own ports. Nelson was satisfied, by what he saw, that they meant to make an attempt from this place, but that it was impracticable; for the least wind at W. N. W., and they were lost. The ports of Flushing and Flanders were better points; there we could not tell by our eyes what means of transport were provided. From thence therefore, if it came forth at all, the expedition would come: “And what a forlorn undertaking!” said he: “consider cross tides, &c. As for rowing, that is impossible. It is perfectly right to be prepared for a mad government; but with the active force which has been given me, I may pronounce it almost impracticable.”



That force had been got together with an alacrity which has seldom been equalled. On the twenty-eight of July, we were, in Nelson's own words, literally at the foundation of our fabric of defence: and twelve days afterward we were so prepared on the enemy's coast, that he did not believe they could get three miles from their ports. The *Medusa*, returning to our own shores, anchored in the rolling ground off Harwich; and when Nelson wished to get to the Nore in her, the wind rendered it impossible to proceed there by the usual channel. In haste to be at the Nore, remembering that he had been a tolerable pilot for the mouth of the Thames in his younger days, and thinking it necessary that he should know all that should be known of the navigation, he requested the maritime surveyor of the coast, Mr. Spencer, to get him into the Swin, by any channel; for neither the pilots which he had on board, nor the Harwich ones, would take charge of the ship. No vessel drawing more than fourteen feet had ever before ventured over the Naze. Mr. Spence, however, who had surveyed the channel, carried her safely through. The channel has since been called Nelson's, though he himself wished it to be named after the *Medusa*: his name needed no new memorial.

Nelson's eye was upon Flushing.—‘To take possession of that place,’ he said, ‘would be a week's expedition for four or five thousand troops.’ This however, required a consultation with the Admiralty; and that something might be done, meantime, he resolved upon attacking the flotilla in the mouth of Boulogne harbour. This resolution was made in deference to the opinion of others, and to the public feeling, which was so preposterously excited. He himself scrupled not to assert, that the French army would never embark at Boulogne for the invasion of England; and he owned, that this boat-warfare was not exactly congenial to his feelings. Into Helvoet or Flushing, he should be happy to lead, if government turned their thoughts that way. “While I serve,” said he, “I will do it actively, and to the very best of my abilities.—I require nursing like a child,” he added; “my mind carries me beyond my strength, and will do me up:—but such is my nature.”

The attack was made by the boats of the squadron in five divisions, under Captains Somerville, Parker, Cotgrave, Jones, and Conn. The previous essay had taught the French the weak parts of their position; and they omitted no means of strengthening it, and of guarding against the expected attempt. The boats put off about half an hour before midnight; but, owing to the darkness, and tide and half tide, which must always make night attacks so uncertain on the coasts of the channel, the divisions separated. One could not arrive at all; another not till near daybreak. The others made their attack gallantly; but the enemy were fully prepared: every vessel was defended by long poles, headed with iron spikes, projecting from their sides; strong nettings were braced up to their yards; they were moored by the bottom to the shore: they were strongly manned with soldiers, and protected by land batteries, and the shore was lined with troops. Many were taken possession of; and, though they could not have been brought out, would have been burned, had not the French resorted to a mode of offence, which they have often used, but which no other people have ever been wicked enough to employ. The moment the firing ceased on board one of their own ves-



sels they fired upon it from the shore, perfectly regardless of their own men.

The commander of one of the french divisions acted like a generous emy. He hailed the boats as they approached, and cried out in English: Let me advise you, my brave Englishmen, to keep your distance: you can do nothing here; and it is only uselessly shedding the blood of brave men to make the attempt." The French official account boasted of the victory. "The combat," it said, "took place in sight of both countries; it was first of the kind, and the historian would have cause to make this remark." They guessed our loss at four or five hundred:—it amounted to one hundred and seventy-two. In his private letters to the admiralty Nelson affirmed, that had our force arrived as he intended, it was not all the chains in France which could have prevented our men from bringing off the whole of the vessels. There had been no error committed, and never did Englishmen display more courage. Upon this point Nelson was fully satisfied; but he said he should never bring himself again to allow any attack, wherein he was not personally concerned; and that his mind suffered more than if he had had a leg shot off in the affair. He grieved particularly for Captain Parker.—an excellent officer, to whom he was greatly attached, and who had an aged father looking to him for assistance. His thigh was shattered in the action; and the wound proved mortal, after some weeks of suffering and manly resignation. During this interval, Nelson's anxiety was very great. "Dear Parker is my child," said he; "for I found him in distress." And when he received the tidings of his death, he replied:—"You will judge of my feelings: God's will be done. I beg that his hair be cut off and given me;—it shall be buried in my grave. Poor Mr. Parker! What a son has he lost! If I were to say I was content, I should lie; but I shall submit with all the fortitude in my power.—His loss has made a wound in my heart, which time will hardly heal."

He had purchased a house and estate at Merton, in Surry; meaning to pass his days there in the society of Sir William and Lady Hamilton. He had indulged in pleasant dreams when looking on to this as a place of residence and rest. 'To be sure,' he says, 'we shall employ the trades people of our village in preference to any others, in what we want for common use; and give them every encouragement to be kind and attentive to us.'—"Have we a nice church at Merton? We will set an example of goodness to the under-parishioners. I admire the pigs and poultry. Sheep are certainly most beneficial to eat off the grass. Do you get paid for them, and take care that they are kept on the premises all night, for that is the time they do most good to the land. They should be folded. Is your head man a good person, and true to our interest? I intend to have a farming-book. I expect that all animals will suffer any to be killed.—No person can take amiss our not visiting.—The answer from me will always be very civil thanks, but that I wish to live retired. We shall have our sea-friends; and I know Sir William thinks they are the best." This place he had never seen, till he was now welcomed there by the friends to whom he had so passionately devoted himself, and who were not less sincerely attached to him. The place, and every thing which Lady Hamilton had done to it, delighted him; and he declared that the longest liver should possess it all. Here he amused himself with angling in the Wandle, having been a good fly-fisher in former days, and learning now to practise with his left hand,



what he could no longer pursue as a solitary diversion. His pensions for his victories, and for the loss of his eye and arm, amounted with his half-pay to about £3,400 a year. From this he gave £1,800 to Lady Nelson, £200 to a brother's widow, and £150 for the education of his children; and he paid £500 interest for borrowed money; so that Nelson was comparatively a poor man; and though much of the pecuniary embarrassment which he endured was occasioned by the separation from his wife—even if that cause had not existed, his income would not have been sufficient for the rank which he held, and the claims which would necessarily be made upon his bounty. The depression of spirits under which he had long laboured, arose partly from this state of his circumstances, and partly from the other disquietudes in which his connection with Lady Hamilton had involved him: a connection which it was not possible his father could behold without sorrow and displeasure. Mr. Nelson, however, was soon persuaded that the attachment, which Lady Nelson regarded with natural jealousy and resentment, did not, in reality, pass the bounds of ardent and romantic admiration: a passion which the manners and accomplishments of Lady Hamilton, fascinating as they were, would not have been able to excite, if they had not been accompanied by more uncommon intellectual endowments, and by a character which, both in its strength and in its weakness, resembled his own. It did not, therefore, require much explanation to reconcile him to his son;—an event the more essential to Nelson's happiness, because, a few months afterward, the good old man died, at the age of seventy-nine.

Soon after the conclusion of peace, tidings arrived of our final and decisive successes in Egypt: in consequence of which the common council voted their thanks to the army and navy for bringing the campaign to so glorious a conclusion. When Nelson, after the action off Cape St. Vincent, had been entertained at a city continued its generosity, the navy would ruin them in gifts." To which the lord-mayor replied, putting his hand upon the admiral's shoulder, "Do you find victories, and we will find, rewards." Nelson, as he said, had kept his word,—had doubly fulfilled his part of the contract,—but no thanks had been voted for the battle of Copenhagen; and, feeling that he and his companions in that day's glory had a fair and honourable claim to this reward, he took the present opportunity of addressing a letter to the lord-mayor, complaining of the omission and the injustice. "The smallest services," said he, "rendered by the army or navy to the country, have always been noticed by the great city of London, with one exception—the glorious 2d of April:—a day, when the greatest dangers of navigation were overcome; and the Danish force, which they thought impregnable, totally taken or destroyed, by the consummate skill of our commanders, and by the undaunted bravery of as gallant a band as ever defended the rights of this country. For myself, if I were only personally concerned, I should bear the stigma, attempted to be now first placed upon my brow, with humility. But, my lord, I am the natural guardian of the fame of all the officers of the navy, army, and marines, who fought, and so profusely bled, under my command on that day. Again, I disclaim for myself more merit than naturally falls to a successful commander; but when I am called upon to speak of the merits of the captains of his



majesty's ships, and of the officers and men, whether seamen, marines, or soldiers, whom I that day had the happiness to command, I then say, that never was the glory of this country upheld with more determined bravery than on that occasion : and, if I may be allowed to give an opinion as a Briton, then I say, that more important service was never rendered to our king and country. It is my duty, my, lord, to prove to the brave fellows, my companions in danger, that I have not failed, at every proper place, to represent, as well as I am able, their bravery and meritorious conduct."

Another honour, of greater import, was withheld from the conquerors. The king had given medals to those captains who were engaged in the battles of the 1st of June, of Cape St. Vincent, of Camperdown, and of the Nile. Then came the victory at Copenhagen: which Nelson truly called the most difficult achievement, the hardest fought battle the most glorious result, that ever graced the annals of our country. He, of course, expected the medal : and, in writing to Earl St. Vincent, said, "He longed to have it, and would not give it up to be made an English duke." The medal, however, was not given:—"For what reason," said Nelson, "Lord St. Vincent best knows."—Words plainly implying a suspicion, that it was withheld by some feeling of jealousy : and that suspicion estranged him, during the remaining part of his life, from one who had at one time been essentially, as well as sincerely, his friend; and of whose professional abilities he ever entertained the highest opinion.

The happiness which Nelson enjoyed in the society of his chosen friends, was of no long continuance. Sir William Hamilton, who was far advanced in years, died early in 1803; a mild, amiable, accomplished man, who has thus, in a letter, described his own philosophy:—"My study of antiquities," he says, "has kept me in constant thought of the perpetual fluctuation of every thing. The whole art is really to live all the days of our life; and not with anxious care disturb the sweetest hour that life affords,—which is the present. Admire the Creator, and all his works, to us incomprehensible; and do all the good you can upon earth: and take the chance of eternity." He expired in his wife's arms, holding Nelson by the hand; and almost in his last words left her to his protection; requesting him that he would see justice done her by the government, as he knew what she had done for her country. He left him her portrait in enamel, calling him his dearest friend; the most virtuous, loyal, and truly brave character he had ever known. The codicil, containing this request, concluded with these words: "God bless him, and shame fall on those who do not say amen." Sir William's pension, of £1200 a year, ceased with his death. Nelson applied to Mr. Addington in Lady Hamilton's behalf, stating the important service which she had rendered to the fleet at Syracuse: and Mr. Addington, it is said, acknowledged that she had a just claim upon the gratitude of the country. This barren acknowledgment was all that was obtained: but a sum, equal to the pension which her husband had enjoyed, was settled on her by Nelson, and paid in monthly payments



during his life. A few weeks after this event, the war was renewed ; and, the day after his majesty's message to parliament, Nelson departed to take the command of the Mediterranean fleet. The war, he thought, could not be long ; just enough to make him independent in pecuniary matters.

He took his station immediately off Toulon ; and there, with incessant vigilance, waited for the coming out of the enemy. The expectation of acquiring a competent fortune did not last long. "Somehow," he says, "my mind is not sharp enough for prize-money. Lord Keith would have made £20,000, and I have not made £600." More than once he says that the prizes taken in the Mediterranean had not paid his expenses : and once he expresses himself as if it were a consolation to think that some ball might soon close all his accounts with this world of care and vexation. At this time the widow of his brother, being then blind and advanced in years, was distressed for money, and about to sell the plate ; he wrote to Lady Hamilton, requesting of her to find out what her debts were, and saying, that if the amount was within his power he would certainly pay it, and rather pinch himself than that she should want. Before he had finished the letter, an account arrived that a sum was payable to him for some neutral taken four years before, which enabled him to do this without being the poorer : and he seems to have felt at the moment that what is thus disposed of by a cheerful giver, shall be paid to him again.—One from whom he had looked for a very different conduct, had compared his own wealth in no becoming manner with Nelson's limited means. "I know," said he to Lady Hamilton, "the full extent of the obligation I owe him, and he may be useful to me again ; but I can never forget his unkindness to you. But I guess many reasons influenced his conduct in bragging of his riches and my honourable poverty, but as I have often said, and with honest pride, what I have is my own ; it never cost the widow a tear, or the nation a farthing. I got what I have with my pure blood, from the enemies of my country. Our house, my own Emma, is built upon a solid foundation ; and will last to us, when his house and lands may belong to others than his children."

His hope was that peace might soon be made, or that he should be relieved from his command, and retire to Merton, where at that distance he was planning and directing improvements. On his birth-day he writes, "This day, my dearest Emma, I consider as more fortunate than common days, as by my coming into this world it has brought me so intimately acquainted with you. I will know that you will keep it, and have my dear Horatio to drink my health. Forty-six years of toil and trouble ! How few more the common lot of mankind leads us to expect ! and therefore it is almost time to think of spending the last few years in peace and quietness." It is painful to think that this language was not addressed to his wife, but to one with whom he promised himself "many happy years, when that impediment," as he calls her, "shall be removed, if God pleased ;" and they might be surrounded by their children's children.



When he had been fourteen months off Toulon, he received a vote of thanks from the city of London, for his skill and perseverance in blockading that port, so as to prevent the French from putting to sea. Nelson had not forgotten the wrong which the city had done to the Baltic fleet by their omission, and did not lose the opportunity which this vote afforded of recurring to that point. "I do assure your lordship," said he, in his answer to the lord-mayor, "that there is not that man breathing who sets a higher value upon the thanks of his fellow-citizens of London than myself; but I should feel as much ashamed to receive them for a particular service, marked in the resolution, if I felt that I did not come within that line of service, as I should feel her at having a great victory passed over without notice. I beg to inform your lordship, that the port of Toulon has never been blockaded by me: quite the reverse. Every opportunity has been offered the enemy to put to sea: for it is there that we hope to realize the hopes and expectations of our country." Nelson then remarked, that the junior flag officers of his fleet had been omitted in this vote of thanks; and his surprise at the omission was expressed with more asperity, perhaps, that an offence, so entirely and manifestly unintentional, deserved; but it arose from that generous regard for the feeling as well as interests of all who were under his command, which made him as much beloved in the fleets of Britain as he was dreaded in those of the enemy.

Never was any commander more beloved. He governed men by their affections: they knew that he was incapable of caprice or tyranny; and they obeyed him with alacrity and joy, because he possessed their confidence as well as their love. "Our Nel," they used to say, "is as brave as a lion, and as gentle as a lamb." Severe discipline he detested, though he had been bred in a severe school: he never inflicted corporeal punishment, if it were possible to avoid it, and when compelled to enforce it, he, who was familiar with wounds and death, suffered like a woman. In his whole life Nelson was never known to act unkindly towards an officer. If he was asked to prosecute one for ill-behaviour, he used to answer, "That there was no occasion for him to ruin a poor devil, who is sufficiently his own enemy to ruin himself." But in Nelson there was more than the easiness and humanity of a happy nature: he did not merely abstain from injury; his was an active and watchful benevolence, ever desirous not only to render justice, but to do good. During the peace, he had spoken in parliament upon the abuses respecting prize-money; and had submitted plans to government for more easily manning the navy, and preventing desertion from it, by bettering the condition of the seamen. He proposed that their certificates should be registered, and that every man who had served, with a good character, five years in war, should receive a bounty of two guineas annually after that time, and of four guineas after eight years. "This," he said, "might, at first sight, appear an enormous sum for the state to pay; but the average life of seamen is, from hard service, finished at forty-five: he cannot, therefore, enjoy the annuity many years; and the interest of the money saved by their not deserting, would go far to pay the whole expense."



To his midshipmen he ever showed the most winning kindness, encouraging the diffident, tempering the hasty, counselling and befriending both. "Recollect," he used to say, "that you must be a seaman to be an officer; and also, that you cannot be a good officer without being a gentleman."—A lieutenant wrote to him to say, that he was dissatisfied with his captain. Nelson's answer was in that spirit of perfect wisdom and perfect goodness, which regulated his whole conduct towards those who were under his command. "I have just received your letter; and am truly sorry that any difference should arise between your captain, who has the reputation of being one of the brightest officers of the service, and yourself, a very young man, and a very young officer, who must naturally have much to learn: therefore, the chance is, that you are perfectly wrong in the disagreement. However, as your present situation must be very disagreeable, I will certainly take an early opportunity of removing you, provided your conduct to the present captain be such, that another may not refuse to receive you." The gentleness and benignity of his disposition never made him forget what was due to discipline. Being on one occasion applied to, to save a young officer from court-martial, which he had provoked by his misconduct, his reply was, "That he would do every thing in his power to oblige so gallant and good an officer as Sir John Warren," in whose name the intercession had been made:—"But what," he added, "would he do if he were here?—Exactly what I have done, and am still willing to do. The young man must write such a letter of contrition as would be an acknowledgment of his great fault; and with a sincere promise, if his captain will intercede to prevent the impending court-martial, never so to misbehave again. On his captain's enclosing me such a letter, with a request to cancel the order for the trial, I might be induced to do it: but the letters and reprimand will be given in the public order-book of the fleet, and read to all the officers. The young man has pushed himself forward to notice, and he must take the consequence.—It was upon the quarter-deck, in the face of the ship's company, that he treated his captain with contempt; and I am in duty bound to support the authority and consequence of every officer under my command. A poor ignorant seaman is for ever punished for contempt to *his* superiors."

A dispute occurred in the fleet, while it was off Toulon, which called forth Nelson's zeal for the rights and interests of the navy. Some young artillery officers, serving on board the bomb vessels, refused to let their men perform any other duty but what related to their mortars. They wished to have it established, that their corps was not subject to the captain's authority. The same pretensions were made in the channel fleet about the same time; and the artillery rested their claims to separate and independent authority on board, upon a clause in the act, which they interpreted in their favour. Nelson took up the subject with all the earnestness its importance deserved.—"There is no real happiness in this world," said he, writing to Earl St. Vincent as first Lord. "With all content, and smiles around me, up start theseartil-



lery boys, (I understand they are not beyond that age), and set us at defiance ; speaking in the most disrespectful manner of the navy, and its commanders. I know you, my dear lord, so well, that, with your quickness, the matter would have been settled, and perhaps some of them been broke. I am, perhaps more patient : but I do assure you, not less resolved, if my plan of conciliation is not attended to. You and I are on the eve of quitting the theatre of our exploits ; but we hold it due to our successors, never, while we have a tongue to speak, or a hand to write, to allow the navy to be in the smallest degree, injured in its discipline by our conduct." To Trowbridge he wrote in the same spirit. "It is the old history, trying to do away the act of parliament ; but I trust they will never succeed ; for, when they do, farewell to our naval superiority. We should be prettily commanded ! Let them once gain the step of being independent of the navy on board a ship, and they will soon have the other and command us.—But, thank God ! my dear Trowbridge, the king himself cannot do away the act of parliament. Although my career is nearly run, yet it would embitter my future days and expiring moments, to hear of our navy being sacrificed to the army." As the surest way of preventing such disputes, he suggested that the navy should have its own corps of artillery ; and a corps of marine artillery was accordingly established.

Instead of lessening the power of the commander, Nelson would have wished to see it increased ; it was absolutely necessary, he thought, that merit should be rewarded at the moment, and that the officers of the fleet should look up to the commander-in-chief for their reward. He himself was never more happy than when he could promote those who were deserving of promotion. Many were the services which he thus rendered unsolicited : and frequently the officer, in whose behalf he had interested himself with the Admiralty, did not know to whose friendly interference he was indebted for his good fortune—He used to say, "I wish it to appear as a God-send." The love which he bore the navy made him promote the interests, and honour the memory, of all who had added to its glories. "The near relations of brother-officers," he said, "he considered as legacies to the service," Upon mention being made to him of a son of Rodney, by the Duke of Clarence, his reply was ; I agree with your royal highness most entirely, that the son of a Rodney ought to be the *protege* of every person in the kingdom, and particularly of the sea-officers. Had I known that there had been this claimant, some of my own lieutenants must have given way to such a name, and he should have been placed in the *Victory* : she is full, and I have twenty on my list ; but, whatever numbers I have, the name of Rodney must cut many of them out." Such was the proper sense which Nelson felt of what was due to splendid services and illustrious names. His feelings towards the men who had served with him, are shown by a note in his diary, which was probably not intended for any other eye than his own. "Nov. 7. I had the comfort of making an old Agamemnon, Geo. Jones, a gunner into the Chameleon brig."

When Nelson took the command, it was expected that the Mediterranean would be an active scene. Nelson well understood the character of the perfidious Corsican, who was now sole tyrant of France ; and knowing that he was as ready to attack his friends as his enemies, knew, therefore, that nothing could be more uncertain than the direction



the fleet from Toulon, whenever it should put to sea :—"It had as many destinations." The momentous revolutions of the last ten years had given him ample matter for reflection, as well as opportunities for observation: the film was cleared from his eyes; and now when the French no longer went abroad with the cry of liberty and equality, he saw that the oppression and misrule of the powers which had been opposed to them had been the main causes of their success, and that those causes would still prepare the way before them. Even in Sicily, where, if it had been possible longer to blind himself, Nelson would willingly have seen no evil, he perceived that the people wished for a change, and acknowledged that they had reason to wish for it. In Sardinia the same burden of misgovernment was felt; and the people, like the Sicilians, were impoverished by a government so utterly incompetent to perform its first and most essential duties, that it did not protect its own coasts from the Barbary pirates. He would fain have had us purchase this Island (the finest in the Mediterranean) from its sovereign, who did not receive £600 a year from it, after its wretched establishment was paid. There was reason to think that France was preparing to possess herself of this important point, which afforded our fleets facilities for watching Toulon, not to be obtained elsewhere. An expedition was preparing at Corsica for the purpose; and all the Sardinians who had taken part with revolutionary France were ordered to assemble there. It was certain that, if the attack were made, it would succeed. Nelson thought that the only means to prevent Sardinia from becoming French, was to make it English, and that half a million would give the King a rich price, and England a cheap purchase. A better, and therefore a wiser, policy would have been to exert our influence in removing the abuses of the government: for foreign dominion is always, in some degree, an evil; and allegiance neither can nor ought to be made a thing of bargain and sale. Sardinia, like Sicily and Corsica, is large enough to form a separate state. Let us hope that these Islands may one day be made free and independent. Freedom and independence will bring with them industry and prosperity; and wherever these are found, arts and letters will flourish, and the improvement of the human race proceed.

The proposed attack was postponed. Views of wider opening upon Buonaparte, who now almost undisguisedly aspired to make himself master of the continent of Europe; and Austria was preparing for one struggle, to be conducted as weakly and terminated as miserably as the former. Spain, too, was once more to be involved in war, by the policy of France: that perfidious government having in view the double object of employing the Spanish resources against England, and exhausting them, in order to render Spain herself finally its prey. Nelson, who knew that England and the Peninsula ought to be in alliance, for the common interest of both, frequently expressed his hopes that Spain might resume her natural rank among the nations. "We ought," he said, "by mutual consent, to be the very best friends, and both to be ever hostile to France." But he saw that Buonaparte was meditating the destruction of Spain; and that, while the wretched court of Madrid professed to remain neutral, the appearances of neutrality were scarcely preserved. An order of the year 1771, excluding British ships of war from the Spanish ports, was revived, and put in force; while French privateers, from these very ports, annoyed the British trade,



carried their prizes in, and sold them even at Barcelona. Nelson complained of this to the captain-general of Catalonia, informing him, that he claimed, for every British ship or squadron the right of lying, as long as it pleased, in the ports of Spain, while that right was allowed to other powers. To the British ambassador he said, "I am ready to make large allowances for the miserable situation Spain has placed herself in ; but there is a certain line beyond which I cannot submit to be treated with disrespect. We have given up French vessels taken within gunshot of the Spanish shore, and yet French vessels are permitted to attack our ships from the Spanish shore.

During this state of things, to which the weakness of Spain, and not her will, consented, the enemy's fleet did not venture to put to sea. Nelson watched it with unremitting and almost unexampled perseverance. The station off Toulon he called his home. "We are in the right fighting trim," said he : "let them come as soon as they please. I never saw a fleet, altogether, so well officered and manned : would to God the ships were half as good !—The finest ones in the service would soon be destroyed by such terrible weather. I know well enough, that if I were to go into Malta I should save the ships during this bad season : but if I am to watch the French, I must be at sea ; and, if at sea, must have bad weather : and if the ships are not fit to stand bad weather, they are useless." Then only he was satisfied, and at ease, when he had the enemy in view. Mr. Elliot, our minister, at Naples, seems, at this time, to have proposed to send a confidential Frenchman to him with information. "I should be very happy," he replied, "to receive authentic intelligence of the destination of the French squadron, their route, and time of sailing. Any thing short of this is useless ; and I assure your Excellency, that I would not, upon any occasion, have a Frenchman in the fleet, except as a prisoner. I put no confidence in them. You think yours good, the queen thinks the same : I believe they are all alike. Whatever information you can get me I shall be very thankful for ; but not a Frenchman comes here. Forgive me, but my mother hated the French."

M. Latouche Treville, who had commanded at Boulogne, commanded now at Toulon. "He was sent for on purpose," said Nelson, "as he beat me at Boulogne, to beat me again : but he seems very loth to try." One day, while the main body of our fleet was out of sight of land, Rear-Admiral Campbell, reconnoitering with the *Canopus*, *Donnegal*, and *Amazon*, stood in close to the port ; and M. Latouche, taking advantage of a breeze which sprung up, pushed out, with four ships of the line, and three heavy frigates, and chased him about four leagues. The Frenchman delighted in having found himself in so novel a situation, published a boastful account ; affirming that he had given chase to the whole British fleet, and that Nelson had fled before him ! Nelson thought it due to the Admiralty to send home a copy of the *Victory's* log upon this occasion. "As for himself," he said, "if his character was not established by that time for not being apt to run away, it was not worth his while to put the world right."—"If this fleet gets fairly up with M. Latouche," said he to one of his correspondents, "his letter, with all his ingenuity, must be different from his last. We had fancied that we chased him into Toulon ; for, blind as I am, I could see his water line, when he clewed his topsails up, shutting in *Sepet*. But, from the time of his meeting Capt. Hawker, in the *Isis*, I never



heard of his acting otherwise than a poltroon and a liar. Contempt is the best mode of treating such a miscreant." In spite, however, of contempt, the impudence of this Frenchman half angered him. He said to his brother: "You will have seen Latouche's letter; how he chased me, and how I ran. I keep it: and if I take him, by God, he shall eat it."

Nelson, who used to say, that in sea-affairs, nothing is impossible, and nothing is improbable, feared the more that this Frenchman might get out and elude his vigilance; because he was so especially desirous of catching him, of administering to him his own lying-letter in a sandwich. M. Latouche, however, escaped him in another way. He died, according to the French papers, in consequence of walking so often up to the signal post upon Sepet, to watch the British fleet. "I always pronounced that would be his death," said Nelson. "If he had come out and fought me, it would, at least, have added ten years to my life." The patience with which he had watched Toulon, he spoke of, truly, as a perseverance at sea, which had never been surpassed. From May, 1803, to August, 1804, he himself went out of his ship but three times; each of these times was upon the King's service, and neither time of absence exceeded an hour. In 1804, the Swift cutter going out with despatches was taken, and all the despatches and letters, fell into the hands of the enemy. "A pretty piece of work!" says Nelson, "I am not surprised at the capture, but am very much so that any despatches should be sent in a vessel with twenty-three men, not equal to cope with any row-boat privateer. The loss of the Hindostan was great enough; but for importance, it is lost, in comparison to the probable knowledge the enemy will obtain of our connexions with foreign countries. Foreigners for ever say, and it is true, we dare not trust England: one way or other we are sure to be committed." In a subsequent letter, he says, speaking of the same capture: "I find, my dearest Emma, that your picture is much admired by the French Consul at Barcelona; and that he has not sent it to be admired, which I am sure it would be, by Buonaparte. They pretend that there were three pictures taken. I wish I had them: but they are all gone as irretrievably as the despatches; unless we may read them in a book, as we printed their correspondence from Egypt. But from us what can they find out? That I love you most dearly, and hate the French most damnably. Dr. Scott went to Barcelona to try to get the private letters; but I fancy they are all gone to Paris. The Swedish and American Consuls told him, that the French Consul had your pictures and read your letters; and the Doctor thinks one of them, probably, read the letters. By the master's account of the cutter, I would not trust an old pair of shoes in her. He tells me she did not sail, but was a good sea-boat. I hope Mr. Marsden will not trust any more of my private letters in such a conveyance: if they choose to trust the affairs of the public in such a thing, I cannot help it."

While he was on this station, the weather had been unusually severe, that he said the Mediterranean seemed altered. It was his rule never to contend with the gales; but either ran to the southward to escape their violence, or to furl all the sails, to make the ships as easy as possible. The men, though he said flesh and blood could hardly stand it, continued in excellent health, which he ascribed, in great measure, to a plentiful supply of lemons and onions. For himself, he thought he



could only last till the battle was over. One battle more it was his hope that he might fight.—“However,” said he, “whatever happens, I have run a glorious race.” “A few months’ rest,” he says, “I must have very soon. If I am in my grave, what are the mines of Peru to me? But to say the truth, I have no idea of killing myself. I may, with care, live to do good service to the state. My cough is very bad, and my side, where I was struck on the 14th of February, is very much swelled; at times, a lump, as large as my fist, brought on occasionally by violent coughing. But I hope and believe my lungs are yet safe.” He was afraid of blindness; and this was the only evil which he could not contemplate without unhappiness. More alarming symptoms he regarded with less apprehension; describing his own “shattered carcass,” as in the worst plight of any in the fleet: and he says, “I have felt the blood gushing up the left side of my head; and, the moment, it covers the brain, I am fast asleep.” The fleet was in worse trim than the men: but when he compared it with the enemy’s, it was with a right English feeling. “The French fleet yesterday,” said he, in one of his letters, “was to appearance in high feather, and as fine as paint could make them:—but when they may sail, or where they may go, I am very sorry to say is a secret I am not acquainted with. Our weather beaten ships, I have no fear, will make their sides like a plumb pudding.” “Yesterday,” he says, on another occasion, “a rear-admiral and seven sail of ships put their nose outside the harbour. If they go on playing this game, some day we shall lay salt upon their tails.”

Hostilities at length commenced between Great Britain and Spain. That country whose miserable government made her subservient to France, was once more destined to lavish her resources and her blood in furtherance of the designs of a perfidious ally. The immediate occasion of the war was the seizure of four treasure-ships by the English. The act was perfectly justifiable; for those treasures were intended means for France; but the circumstances which attended it were as unhappy as they were unforeseen. Four frigates had been despatched to intercept them. They met with an equal force. Resistance, therefore, became a point of honour on the part of the Spaniards, and one of their ships soon blew up with all on board. Had a stronger squadron been sent this deplorable catastrophe might have been spared: a catastrophe which excited not more indignation in Spain, than it did grief in those who were unwilling instruments, in the English government, and in the English people. On the 5th of October this unhappy affair occurred, and Nelson was not apprised of it till the 12th of the ensuing month. He had sufficient mortification at the breaking out of this Spanish war; an event which, it might reasonably have been supposed, would amply enrich the officers of the Mediterranean fleet, and repay them for the severe and unremitting duty on which they had been so long employed. But of this harvest they were deprived; for Sir John Orde was sent with a small squadron, and a separate command, to Cadiz. Nelson’s feelings were never wounded so deeply as now. “I had thought,” said he, writing in the first flow and freshness of indignation; “I fancied,—but nay; it must have been a dream, an idle dream;—yet, I confess it, I *did* fancy that I had done my country service; and thus they use me!—And under what circumstances, and with what pointed aggravation!—Yet, if I know my own thoughts, it is not for myself, or on my own account chiefly, that I feel the sting and the disappointment. No! it is for my brave officers; for my noble-minded friends and comrades.



War between Spain and England was now declared ; and on the eighteenth of January, the Toulon fleet, having the Spaniards to co-operate with them, put to sea. Nelson was at anchor off the coast of Sardinia, where the Madalena islands form one of the finest harbours in the world, when, at three in the afternoon on the nineteenth, the Active and Seahorse frigates brought this long-hoped-for intelligence. They had been close to the enemy at ten on the preceding night, but lost sight of them in about four hours. The fleet immediately unmoored and weighed, and at six in the evening ran through the strait between Biche and Sardinia : a passage so narrow, that the ships could only pass one at a time, each following the stern lights of its leader. From the position of the enemy, when they were last seen, it was inferred that they must be bound round the southern end of Sardinia. Signal was made the next morning to prepare for battle. Bad weather came on, baffling the one fleet in its object, and the other in its pursuit. Nelson beat about the Sicillian seas for ten days, without obtaining any other information of the enemy, than that of their ships had put into Ajaccio, dismasted ; and having seen that Sardinia, Naples, and Sicily were safe, believing Egypt to be their destination, for Egypt he ran. The disappointment and distress which he had experienced in his former pursuits of the French through the same seas were now renewed : but Nelson, while he endured these anxious and unhappy feelings, was still consoled by the same confidence as on the former occasion—that, though his judgment might be erroneous, under all circumstances he was right in having formed it. “I have consulted no man,” said he, to the Admiralty ; “therefore, the whole blame of ignorance in forming my judgment must rest with me. I would allow no man to take from me an atom of my glory had I fallen in with the French fleet ; nor do I desire any man to partake any of the responsibility. All is mine, right or wrong.” Then stating the grounds upon which he had proceeded, he added, “At this moment of sorrow, I still feel that I have acted right.” In the same spirit he said to Sir Alexander Ball, “When I call to remembrance all the circumstances, I approve, if nobody else does, of my own conduct.”

Baffled thus, he bore up for Malta, and met intelligence from Naples that the French having been dispersed in a gale, had put back to Toulon. From the same quarter he learned, that a great number of saddles and muskets had been embarked ; and this confirmed him in his opinion that Egypt was thier destination. That they should have put back in consequence of storms, which he had weathered, gave him a consoling sense of British superiority.—“These gentlemen,” said he, “are not accustomed to a Gulf of Lyons gale : we have buffeted them for one-and-twenty months, and not carried away a spar.” He, however, who had so often braved these gales, was now, though not mastered by them vexatiously thwarted and impeded ; and, on February 27th, he was compelled to anchor in Pulla Bay, in the Gulf of Cagliari. From the 21st of January the fleet had remained ready for battle, without a bulk-head up, night or day. He anchored here, that he might not be driven to leeward. As soon as the weather moderated he put to sea again ; and



after again beating about against contrary winds, another gale drove him to anchor in the Gulf of Palma, on the 8th of March. This he made his rendezvous; he knew that the French troops still remained embarked, and, wishing to lead them into a belief that he was stationed upon the Spanish coast, he made his appearance off Barcelona with that intent. About the end of the month, he began to fear that the plan of the expedition was abandoned; and, sailing once more towards his old station off Toulon, on the 5th of April, he met the *Phebe*, with news that Villeneuve had put to sea on the last of March with eleven ships of the line, seven frigates, and two brigs. When last seen, they were steering towards the coast of Africa. Nelson first covered the channel between Sardinia and Barbary, so as to satisfy himself that Villeneuve was not taking the same route for Egypt which Gantheaume had taken before him, when he attempted to carry reinforcements there. Certain of this he bore up on the 7th for Palermo, lest the French should pass to the north of Corsica, and he despatched cruisers in all directions. On the 11th, he felt assured that they were not gone down the Mediterranean; and sending off frigates to Gibraltar, to Lisbon, and to Admiral Cornwallis, who commanded the squadron off Brest, he endeavoured to get to the westward, beating against westerly winds. After five days, a neutral gave intelligence that the French had been seen off Cape de Gatte on the 7th. It was soon after ascertained, that they had passed the Straits of Gibraltar on the day following; and Nelson, knowing that they might already be half way to Ireland, or to Jamaica, exclaimed, that he was miserable. One gleam of comfort only came across him in the reflection, that this vigilance had rendered it impossible for them to undertake any expedition in the Mediterranean.

Eight days after this certain intelligence had been obtained, he described his state of mind thus forcible, in writing to the governor of Malta: "My good fortune, my dear Ball, seems flown away. I cannot get a fair wind, or even a side wind. Dead-foul!—dead foul!—But my mind is fully made up what to do when I leave the Straits, supposing there is no certain account of the enemy's destination.—I believe this ill luck will go near to kill me: but, as these are times for exertion, I must not be cast down, whatever I may feel." In spite of every exertion which could be made, all the zeal and all the skill of British seamen, he did not get in sight of Gibraltar till the 30th of April; and the wind was then so adverse, that it was impossible to pass the Gut. He anchored in Mazari Bay, on the Barbary shore; obtained supplies from Tetuan, and when, on the 5th, a breeze from the eastward sprang up at last, sailed once more, hoping to hear of the enemy from Sir John Orde, who commanded off Cadiz, or from Lisbon. "If nothing is heard of them," said he, to the admiralty, "I shall probably think the rumours which had been spread are true, that their object is the West Indies: and, in that case, I think it my duty to follow them,—or to the antipodes, should I believe that to be their destination." At the time when this resolution was taken, the physician of the fleet had ordered him to return to England before the hot months.



Frustrated in all his hopes, after a pursuit, to which, for its extent, rapidity, and perseverance, no parallel can be produced, he judged it prudent to reinforce the channel fleet with his squadron. On the 15th he joined Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant. No news had yet been obtained of the enemy: and on the same evening he received orders to proceed to Portsmouth. At Portsmouth Nelson found news of the combined fleet. Sir R. Calder, who had been sent out to intercept their return, had fallen in with them on the 22d July, 60 leagues west of Cape Finisterre. Their force consisted of 20 sail of the line, three 50 gun ships, 5 frigates, and 2 brigs: his, of 15 line-of-battle ships, 2 frigates, a cutter, and a lugger. After an action of 4 hours he had captured a 84 and a 74, and then thought it necessary to bring to the squadron, for the purpose of securing their prizes. The hostile fleets remained in sight of each other till the 26th, when the enemy bore away. The capture of 2 ships from so superior a force would have been considered as no considerable victory a few years earlier; but Nelson had introduced a new era in our naval history; and the nation felt, respecting this action, as he had felt on a somewhat similar occasion. They regretted that Nelson, with his eleven ships, had not been in Sir Robert Calder's place; and their disappointment was generally and loudly expressed.

Frustrated as his own hopes had been, Nelson had yet the high satisfaction of knowing that his judgment had never been more conspicuously proved, and that he had rendered essential service to his country, by driving the enemy from those islands, where they expected there could be no force capable of opposing them. It was now his intention to rest awhile from his labours. All his stores were brought up from the Victory; and he found in his house at Merton the enjoyment which he had anticipated. As he was pacing one of the walks in the garden, Lady Hamilton came up to him, and told him she saw he was uneasy. He smiled, and said: "No." She said she did not believe him—that she knew he was longing to get at the combined fleets—that he considered them as his own property,—that he would be miserable if any man but himself did the business. "Nelson," said she, "however we may lament your absence, offer your services:—they will be accepted." His services were as willingly accepted as they were offered; and Lord Barham, giving him the list of the navy, desired him to choose his own officers. Unremitting exertions were made to equip the ships which he had chosen. Before he left London he called at his upholsterer's, where the coffin, which Capt. Hallowell had given him, was deposited; and desired that its history might be engraven upon the lid, saying, that it was highly probable he might want it on his return. Early on the following morning he reached Portsmouth; and having despatched his business on shore, endeavoured to elude the populace by taking a by-way to the beach; but a crowd collected in his train, pressing forward to obtain sight of his face: many were in tears, and many knelt down before him and blessed him as he passed.

Nelson arrived off Cadiz on the 29th of Sep. his birthday. Fearing that, if the enemy knew his force, they might be deterred from venturing to sea, he kept out of sight of land, desired Collingwood to fire no salute, and hoist no colours; and wrote to Gibraltar, to request that the force of the fleet might not be inserted there in the Gazette.

On the day of his arrival, Villeneuve received orders to put to sea the first opportunity. Villeneuve, however, hesitated, when he heard that Nelson had resumed the command. He called a council of war; and their determination was that it would not be expedient to leave Cadiz, unless they had reason to believe themselves stronger by one-third than the British force. In the public measures of this country secrecy is seldom practicable, and seldomer attempted: here, however, by the precautions of Nelson, and the wise measures of the Admiralty, the enemy were for once kept in ignorance; for, as the ships appointed to reinforce the Mediterranean fleet were despatched singly, each as soon as it was ready, their collected number was not stated in the newspapers, and their arrival was not known to the enemy. The station which Nelson had chosen was some 50 or 60 miles to the west of Cadiz, near Cape



St. Mary's. At this distance he hoped to decoy the enemy out, while he guarded against the danger of being caught with a westerly wind near Cadiz, and driven within the Straits. The blockade of the port was rigorously enforced, in hopes that the combined fleet might be forced to sea by want. The Danish vessels, therefore, which were carrying provisions from the French ports in the Bay, under the name of Danish property, to all the little ports from Ayamonte to Algeziras, from whence they were conveyed in coasting boats to Cadiz, were seized. Without this proper exertion of power, the blockade would have rendered nugatory, by the advantage thus taken of the neutral flag. The supplies from France were thus effectually cut off. There was now every indication that the enemy would speedily venture out; the officers and men were in the highest spirits at the prospect of giving them a decisive blow: such, indeed, as would put an end to all farther contest upon the seas. Theatrical amusements were performed every evening in most of the ships: and God save the King was the hymn with which the sports concluded. At this time he was not without some cause of anxiety; he was in want of frigates, the eyes of the fleet as he always called them: to the want of which, the enemy before were indebted for their escape, and Buonaparte for his arrival in Egypt. He had only 23 ships, others were on the way, but they might come too late: and, though Nelson never doubted of victory, mere victory was not what he looked to, it was to annihilate the enemy's fleet.

On the 9th, Nelson sent Collingwood what he called, in his diary, the Nelson-touch. "I send you," said he, "my plan of attack, as far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the enemy may be found in: but it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We can my dear Coll. have no little jealousies. We have only one great object in view, that of annihilating our enemies, and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you; and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend Nelson and Bronte." The order of sailing was to be the order of battle: the fleet in two lines, with an advanced squadron of 8 of the fastest sailing two deckers. The second in command, having the entire direction of his line, was to break through the enemy, about the twelfth ship from their rear: he would lead through the centre, and the advanced squadron was to cut off three or four ahead of the centre. This plan was to be adapted to the strength of the enemy, so that they should always be one-fourth superior to those whom they cut off. Nelson said, "That his admirals and captains, knowing his precise object to be that of a close and decisive action, would supply any deficiency of signals, and act accordingly. In case signals cannot be seen or clearly understood, no captain can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy." One of the last orders of this admirable man was, that the name and family of every officer, seaman, and marine, who might be killed or wounded in action, should be as soon as possible returned to him, in order to be transmitted to the chairman of the patriotic fund, that the case might be taken into consideration, for the benefit of the sufferer or his family.

About half past nine in the morning of the 19th, the Mars, being the nearest to the fleet of the ships which formed the line of communica-



tion with the frigates in shore, repeated the signal, that the enemy were coming out of port. The wind was at this time very light, with partial breezes, mostly from the S. S. W. Nelson ordered the signal to be made for a chase in the south-east quarter. About two, the repeating ships announced, that the enemy were at sea. All night the British fleet continued under all sail, steering to the south-east. At daybreak they were in the entrance of the Straits, but the enemy were not in sight. About seven, one of the frigates made signal that the enemy were bearing north. Upon this the Victory hove to; and shortly afterward Nelson made sail to the northward. In the afternoon the wind blew fresh from the south west, and the English began to fear that the foe might be forced to return to port. A little before sunset, Blackwood, in the *Maryalus*, telegraphed, that they appeared determined to go to the westward,—“And that,” said the admiral, in his diary, “they shall not do, if it is in the power of Nelson and Bronte to prevent them.” Nelson had signified to Blackwood, that he depended upon him to keep sight of the enemy.

Soon after daylight Nelson came upon deck. The 21st of October was a festival in his family, because on that day his uncle, Capt. Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*, with two other line-of-battle ships, had beaten off a squadron of four sail of the line, and three frigates. Nelson, with that sort of superstition from which few persons are entirely exempt, had more than once expressed his persuasion that this was to be the day of his battle also; and he was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified. The wind was now from the west, light breezes, with a long heavy swell. Signal was made to bear down upon the enemy in two lines; and the fleet set all sail. Collingwood, in the *Royal Sovereign*, led the lee line of thirteen ships; the Victory led the weather line of fourteen. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin and wrote the following prayer:

“May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory, and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet. For myself, individually I commit my life to Him that made me; and may His blessings alight on my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is intrusted to me to defend. Amen, Amen, Amen.”

Having thus discharged his devotional duties, he annexed, in the same diary, the following remarkable writing:

“Oct. 21, 1805.—Then in sight of the combined fleets of France and Spain.”

“Whereas the eminent services of Emma Hamilton, widow of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, have been of the very greatest service to my king and country, to my knowledge, without ever receiving any reward from either our king or country;—“First, that she obtained the King of Spain’s letter, in 1796, to his brother the king of Naples, acquainting him of his intention to declare war against England; from which letter the ministry sent out orders to the then Sir John Jervis, to strike a stroke if opportunity offered, against either the arsenals of Spain or her fleets. That neither of these was done is not the fault of Lady Hamilton; the opportunity might have been offered.

“Secondly, the British fleet under my command could never have returned the second time to Egypt, had not Lady Hamilton’s influence with the Queen of Naples caused letters to be written to the governor of Syracuse, that he was to encourage the fleets being supplied with every thing, should they put into any port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse, and received every supply; went to Egypt, and destroyed the French fleet.



"Could I have rewarded these services, I would not now call upon my country; but as that has not been in my power, I leave Emma Lady Hamilton, therefore, a legacy to my king and country, that they will give her an ample provision to maintain her rank in life.

"I also leave to the beneficence of my country my adopted daughter, Horatia Nelson Thomson; and I desire she will use in future the name of Nelson only.

"These are the only favours I ask of my king and country, at this moment when I am going to fight their battle. May God bless my king and country, and all those I hold dear! My relations it is needless to mention; they will, of course, be amply provided for.

"NELSON AND BRONTE.

"Witness, } HENRY BLACKWOOD.  
                  } W. M. HERBY

The child of whom the writing speaks, was believed to to be his daughter, and so indeed, he called her the last time that he pronounced her name.—She was then about five years old, living at Merton, under Lady Hamilton's care. The last minutes with Nelson passed at Merton were employed in praying over his child, as she lay sleeping. A portrait of Lady Hamilton hung in his cabin; and no Catholic ever beheld the picture of his patron saint with devouter reverence. The undisguised and romantic passion with which he regarded it amounted almost to superstition; when the portrait was now taking down, in clearing for action, he desired the men who removed it, to "take care of his guardian angel." In this manner he frequently spoke of it, as if he believed there were a virtue in the image. He wore a miniature of her, also, next his heart.

Blackwood went on board the *Victory* about six. He found him in good spirits, but very calm; not in that exhilaration which he had felt upon entering into battle at Aboukir and Copenhagen: he knew that his own life would be particularly aimed at, and seems to have looked for death with almost as sure an expectation as for victory. His whole attention was fixed upon the enemy. They tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack; thus bringing the shoals of *Trafalgar* and *St. Pedro* under the lee of the British, and keeping the port of Cadiz open for themselves. This was judiciously done; and Nelson, aware of all the advantages which it gave them, made signal to prepare to anchor.

Villeneuve was a skilful seaman; worthy of serving a better master. His plan of defence was as well conceived, and as original, as the plan of attack. He formed the fleet in a double line; every alternate ship being about a cable's length to windward of her second ahead and astern. Nelson, 'certain of a triumphant issue to the day, asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. That officer answered, that, considering the handsome way in which battle was offered by the enemy, and the situation of the land, he thought it would be a glorious result if 14 were captured. He replied, "I shall not be satisfied with less than 20." Soon afterward he asked him, if he did not think there was a signal wanting. Capt. Blackwood made answer, that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. These words were scarcely spoken before that signal was made, which will be remembered as long as the language, or even the memory of England shall endure:—Nelson's last signal: **ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY!**" It was received throughout the fleet with a shout of answering acclamation, made sublime by the spirit which it breathed, and the feeling which it expressed. 'Now,' said Nelson. 'I can do no more.' We must trust to the great Disposer of all events, and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty.'

He wore that day, as usual, his admiral's frock coat, bearing on the left breast four stars, of the different orders with which he was invested. Ornaments which rendered him so conspicuous a mark for the enemy, were beheld with ominous apprehensions by his officers. It was known there were riflemen on board the French ships; and it could not be doubted but that his life would be particularly aimed at. They communicated their fears to each other; and the surgeon, Mr. Beatty,\* spoke

\* In this part of the work I have been chiefly indebted to this gentleman's Narrative of Lord Byron's Death—a Document as interesting as it is authentic.



to the chaplain, Dr. Scott, and Mr. Scott, the public secretary, desiring that some person would entreat him to change his dress, or cover the stars : but they knew that such a request would highly displease him. "In honour I gained them," he had said, when such a thing had been hinted to him formerly, "and in honour I will die with them." Mr. Beatty, however, would not have been deterred by any fear of exciting his displeasure, from speaking to himself upon a subject, in which the weal of England, as well as the life of Nelson, was concerned,—but he was ordered from the deck before he could find an opportunity. This was a point upon which Nelson's officers knew that it was hopeless to reason with him ; but both Blackwood, and his own captain, Hardy, represented to him how advantageous to the fleet it would be for him to keep out of action as long as possible ; and he consented at last to let the *Leviathan* and the *Teméraire*, which were sailing abreast the *Victory* be ordered to pass ahead. Yet even here the last infirmity of this noble mind was indulged, for these ships could not pass ahead if the *Victory* continued to carry all her sail ; and so far was Nelson from shortening sail, that it was evident he took pleasure in pressing on, and rendering it impossible for them to obey his own orders. A long swell was setting into the bay of Cadiz : our ships, crowding all sail, moved majestically before it, with light winds from the south-west. The sun shone on the sails of the enemy ; and their well-formed line, with their numerous three-deckers, made an appearance which any other assailants would have thought formidable ;—but the British sailors only admired the beauty and the splendour of the spectacle ; and, in full confidence of winning what they saw, remarked to each other, what a fine sight yonder ships would make at Spithead !

The French admiral, from the *Bucentaur*, beheld the new manner in which his enemy was advancing—Nelson and Collingwood each leading his line ; and, pointing them out to his officers, he is said to have exclaimed, that such conduct could not fail to be successful. Yet Villeneuve had made his own dispositions with the utmost skill, and the fleets under his command waited for the attack with perfect coolness.—Ten minutes before twelve they opened their fire. Eight or nine of the ships immediately ahead of the *Victory*, and across her bows, fired single guns at her, to ascertain whether she was yet within their range. As soon as Nelson perceived that their shot passed over him, he desired Blackwood, and Capt. Prowse, of the *Sirius*, to repair to their respective frigates ; and, on their way, to tell all the captains of the line-of-battle ships that he depended on their exertions ; and that, if by the prescribed mode of attack they found it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them quickly and closely alongside an enemy. As they were standing on the front of the poop, Blackwood took him by hand, saying, he hoped soon to return and find him in possession of twenty prizes. He replied, "God bless you, Blackwood ; I shall never see you again."

Nelson's column was steered by two points more to the north than Collingwood's in order to cut off the enemy's escape into Cadiz : the lee



line, therefore, was first engaged. "See," cried Nelson, pointing to the *Royal Sovereign*, as she steered right for the centre of the enemy's line, cut through it astern of the *Santa Anna*, three-decker, and engaged her at the muzzle of her guns on the starboard side: "see how that noble fellow, Collingwood carries his ship into action!" Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire, and knowing the feelings of his commander and old friend, turned to his captain, and exclaimed: Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!" Both these brave officers perhaps, at this moment thought of Nelson with gratitude, for a circumstance which had occurred on the preceding day. Admiral Collingwood, with some of the captains, having gone on board the *Victory*, to receive instructions, Nelson inquired of him where his captain was? and was told, in reply, that they were not upon good terms with each other. "Terms!" said Nelson;—"good terms with each other!" Immediately he sent a boat for Captain Rotherham; led him, as soon as he arrived, to Collingwood, and saying,—“Look; yonder are the enemy!” bade them shake hands like Englishmen.

The enemy continued to fire a gun at a time at the *Victory*, till they saw that a shot had passed through her main-top-gallant-sail; then they opened their broadsides, aiming chiefly at her rigging, in the hope of disabling her before she could close with them. Nelson, as usual, had hoisted several flags, lest one should be shot away. The enemy showed no colours till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to strike. For this reason, the *Santissima Trinidad*, Nelson's old acquaintance, as he used to call her, was distinguishable only by her four decks; and to the bow of this opponent he ordered the *Victory* to be steered. Meantime an incessant fire was kept up upon the *Victory*. The admiral's secretary was one of the first who fell; he was killed by a cannon-shot while conversing with Hardy. Capt. Adair of the marines, with the help of a sailor, endeavoured to remove the body from Nelson's sight, who had a great regard for Mr. Scott: but he anxiously asked: "Is that poor Scott that's gone? and being informed that it was indeed so, exclaimed, "Poor fellow!" Presently a double-headed shot struck a party of marines, who were drawn up on the poop, and killed eight of them: upon which, Nelson immediately desired Capt. Adair to disperse his men round the ship, that they might not suffer so much from being together. A few minutes afterward a shot struck the fore brace bits on the quarter deck, and passed between Nelson and Hardy, a splinter from the bit tearing off Hardy's buckle and bruising his foot. Both stooped, and looked anxiously at each other, each supposed the other to be wounded. Nelson then smiled, and said, "This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long."

The *Victory* had not yet returned a single gun; 50 of her men had been by this time killed or wounded, and her main-topmast, with all her studding sails and her booms, shot away. Nelson declared, that in all his battles, he had seen nothing which surpassed the cool courage of his crew on this occasion. At four minutes after twelve, she opened her fire from both sides of her deck. It was not possible to break the enemy's line without running on board one of their ships: Hardy informed him of this, and asked him which he would prefer. Nelson replied, "Take your choice, Hardy, it does not signify much."



Capt. Harvey, in the *Temeraire*, fell on board the *Redoubtable* on the other side. Another enemy was in like manner on board the *Temeraire*: so that these 4 ships formed as compact a tier as if they had been moored together, their heads lying all the same way. The lieutenants of the *Victory*, seeing this, depressed their guns of the middle and lower decks, and fired with a diminished charge, lest the shot should pass through, and injure the *Temeraire*. And because there was danger that the *Redoubtable* might take fire from the lower-deck guns, the muzzles of which touched her side when they were run out, the fireman of each gun stood ready with a bucket of water; which as soon as the gun was discharged, he dashed into the hole made by the shot. An incessant fire was kept up from the *Victory* from both sides; her larboard guns playing upon the *Buceutaure* and the huge *Santissima Trinidad*.

It had been part of Nelson's prayer, that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory which he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the *Redoubtable*, supposing she had struck, because her great guns were silent; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizen-top, which, in the then situation of the two vessels, was not more than fifteen yards from that part of the deck where he was standing, struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor Secretary's blood. Hardy, who was a few steps from, turning round, saw three men raising him up.—“They have done for me at last, Hardy,” said he.—“I hope not,” cried Hardy.—“Yes!” he replied; “my back-bone is shot through.” Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller ropes, which had been shot away, were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately:—then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief, and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England, perhaps, would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar. The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men; over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's birth. It was soon perceived, upon examination, that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all, except Capt. Hardy, the chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back, and the gush of blood he felt momentarily within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful; “for,” said he, “you can do nothing for me.”—All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory* huzzaed; and at every huzza, a visible expression of joy gleamed



in the eyes, and marked the countenance, of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Capt. Hardy; and as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried, "Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed! He is surely dead!"—An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound, before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence; Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. "Well, Hardy," said Nelson, "how goes the day with us?"—"Very well," replied Hardy; "ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the Victory. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing."—"I hope," said Nelson, "none of our ships have struck?" Hardy answered, "There was no fear of that." Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. "I am a dead man, Hardy," said he: "I am going fast:—it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me." Hardy observed, that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. "Oh, not!" he replied: "it is impossible. My back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so." Capt. Hardy then, once more, shook hands with him; and with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

By this time all feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson, having made the surgeon ascertain this, said to him, "You know I am gone; I know it. I feel something rising in my breast," putting his hand on his left side,—"*which tells me so.*" And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great? he replied, "So great, that he wished he was dead. Yet," said he, in a lower voice, "one would like to live a little longer, too!" And after a few minutes, in the same under tone, he added, "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton, if she knew my situation!" Next to his country, she occupied his thoughts. Capt. Hardy, some 50 minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned; and, again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly: but 14 or 15 at least. "That's well," cried Nelson, "but I bargained for 20." And then, in a stronger voice, he said, "Anchor, Hardy; anchor." Hardy, upon this, hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. "Not while I live, Hardy," said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise himself from the bed: "do you anchor." His previous order foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him, in a low voice, "Don't throw me overboard:" and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the king to order otherwise. Then reverting to private feelings. "Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton. —Kiss me, Hardy," said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek: and Nelson said, "Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty." Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then



knelt again, and kissed his forehead. "Who is that?" said Nelson; and being informed, he replied, "God bless you Hardy." And Hardy then left him—for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said, "I wish I had not left the deck; for I shall soon be gone." Death was, indeed, rapidly approaching. He said to the chaplain, "Doctor I have not been a great sinner:" and after a short pause, "Remember that I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country." His articulation now became difficult; but he was distinctly heard to say, "Thank God, I have done my duty." These words he repeatedly pronounced: and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four,—three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound.

Within a quarter of an hour after Nelson was wounded, above fifty of the Victory's men fell by the enemy's musketry. They, however, on their part were not idle; and it was not long before there were only two Frenchmen left alive in the mizen top of the Redoubtable. One of them was the man who had given the fatal wound: he did not live to boast of what he had done. An old quartermaster had seen him fire; and easily recognized him, because he wore a glazed cocked hat and a white frock. This quartermaster and two midshipmen, Mr. Collingwood and Mr. Pollard, were the only persons left in the Victory's poop;—the two midshipmen kept firing at the top, and he supplied them with cartridges. One of the Frenchmen, attempting to make his escape down the rigging, was shot by Mr. Pollard, and fell on the poop. But the old quartermaster, as he cried out, "That's he—that's he," and pointed at the other, who was coming forward to fire again, received a shot in his mouth and fell dead. When they took possession of the prize, they went into the mizen-top, and found him dead; with one ball through his head, and another through his breast.

The Redoubtable struck within 20 minutes after the fatal shot had been fired from her. During that time she had been twice on fire,—in her forechains and in her forecastle. The French, as they had done in other battles, made use, in this of fire-balls, and other combustibles; implements of destruction, which other nations, from a sense of honour and humanity, have laid aside; which add to the sufferings of the wounded, without determining the issue of the combat: which none but the cruel would employ, and which never can be successful against the brave. Once they succeeded in setting fire, from the Redoubtable, to some ropes and canvass on the Victory's booms. The cry ran through the ship and reached the cockpit: but even this dreadful cry produced no confusion: the men displayed that self-possession in danger by which English seamen are characterized; they extinguished the flames on board their own ship; and then extinguished them in the enemy, by throwing buckets of water from the gangway. When the Redoubtable had struck, it was not practicable to board her from the Victory; for, though the two ships touched, the upper works of both fell in so much, that there was a great space between their gangways: and she could not be boarded from the lower or middle decks, because her ports were down. Some of our men went to Lieutenant Quilliam, and offered to swim under her bows, and get up there; but it was thought unfit to hazard brave lives in this manner.



What our men would have done from gallantry, some of the crew of the *Santissima Trinidad* did to save themselves. Unable to stand the tremendous fire of the *Victory*, whose larboard guns played against this great four-decker, and not knowing how else to escape them, nor where else to betake themselves for protection, many of them leaped overboard, and swam to the *Victory*; and were actually helped up her sides by the English during the action. The Spaniards began the battle with less vivacity than their unworthy allies, but they continued it with greater firmness. The *Argonauta* and *Bahama* were defended till they had each lost about 400 men: the *St. Juan Nepomuceno* lost 350. Often as the superiority of British courage has been proved against France upon these seas, it was never more conspicuous than in this decisive conflict. Five of our ships were engaged muzzle to muzzle with five of the French. In all five, the Frenchmen lowered their lower-deck ports, and deserted their guns; while our men continued deliberately to load and fire, till they had made the victory secure.

Once, amid his sufferings, Nelson had expressed a wish that he were dead; But immediately the spirit subdued the pains of death, and he wished to live a little longer;—doubtless that he might hear the completion of the victory which he had seen so gloriously begun. That consolation—that joy—that triumph was afforded him. He lived to know that victory was decisive; and the last guns which were fired at the flying enemy were heard a minute or two before he expired. The ships which were thus flying were four of the enemy's van, all French, under Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. They had borne no part in the action; and now, when they were seeking safety in flight, they fired not only into the *Victory* and *Royal Sovereign* as they passed, but poured their broadsides into the Spanish captured ships; and they were seen to back their topsails, for the purpose of firing with more precision. The indignation of the Spaniards at this detestable cruelty from their allies, for whom they had fought so bravely, and so profusely bled, may well be conceived. It was such, that when, two days after the action, seven of the ships which had escaped into Cadiz came out, in hopes of retaking some of the disabled prizes, the prisoners, in the *Argonauta*, in a body, offered their services to the British prizemaster, to man the guns against any of the French ships: saying, that if a Spanish ship came alongside, they would quietly go below; but they requested that they might be allowed to fight the French, in resentment for the murderous usage which they had suffered at their hands. Such was the implicit confidence which could be placed in Spanish honor, that the offer was accepted, and they were actually stationed at the lower-deck guns. Dumanoir and his squadron were not more fortunate than the fleet from whose destruction they fled; they fell in with Sir Richard Strachan, who was cruising for the Rochefort squadron, and were all taken. In the better days of France, if such a crime could then have been committed, it would have received an exemplary punishment from the French government. under Buonaparte, it was sure of impunity, and, perhaps, might be thought deserving of reward. But, if the Spanish court had been independent, it would have become us to have delivered Dumanoir and his captains up to Spain, that they might have been brought to trial, and hanged in sight of the remains of the Spanish fleet.



The total British loss in the battle of Trafalgar amounted to one thousand five hundred and eighty-seven. Twenty of the enemy struck; but it was not possible to anchor the fleet, as Nelson had enjoined;—a gale came on from the south-west; some of the prizes went down, some went on shore; one effected its escape into Cadiz; others were destroyed; four only were saved and those by the greatest exertions. The wounded Spaniards were sent ashore, an assurance being given that they should not serve till regularly exchanged; and the Spaniards, with a generous feeling, which would not, perhaps, have been found in any other people offered the use of their hospitals for our wounded, pledging the honor of Spain that they should be carefully attended there. When the storm, after the action, drove some of the prizes upon the coast, they declared that the English, who were thus thrown into their hands, should not be considered as prisoners of war; and the Spanish soldiers gave up their own beds to their shipwrecked enemies. The Spanish vice-admiral Alava, died of his wounds. Villeneuve was sent to England, and permitted to return to France. The French government say that he destroyed himself on the way to Paris, dreading the consequences of a court-martial: but there is every reason to believe that the tyrant, who never acknowledged the loss of the battle of Trafalgar, added Villeneuve to the numerous victims of his murderous policy.

It is almost superfluous to add, that all the honors which a grateful country could bestow, were heaped upon the memory of Nelson. His brother was made an earl, with a grant of £6,000 a year; £10,000 were voted to each of his sisters: and £100,000 for the purchase of an estate. A public funeral was decreed, and a public monument. Statues and monuments also were voted by most of our principal cities. The leaden coffin, in which he was brought home, was cut in pieces, which were distributed as relics of Saint Nelson,—so the gunner of the *Victory* called them;—and when, at his interment, his flag was about to be lowered into the grave, the sailors, who assisted at the ceremony, with one accord rent it in pieces, that each might preserve a fragment while he lived.

The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity: men started at the intelligence, and turned pale; as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and revered him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own, and of all former times, was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly, indeed, had he performed his part, that the maritime war after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end: the fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated, but destroyed: new navies must be built and a new set of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him: the general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, and public monuments, and posthumous rewards were all which they now could



bestow upon him, whom the king, the legislature, and the nation would have alike delighted to honour; whom every tongue would have blessed; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed, would have wakened the church bells, have given schoolboys a holyday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and "old men from the chimney corner," to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated, indeed, with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas: and the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for while Nelson was living, to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

There was reason, to suppose, from the appearances upon opening the body, that, in the course of nature, he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done; nor ought he to be lamented, who died so full of honours, and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr; the most awful is that of the martyred patriot; the most splendid is that of the hero in the hour of victory: and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example, which are at this time inspiring thousands of the youth of England: a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and strength.

THE END.







